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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Hull Muddling

There are in the United States at present three important bodies of opinion in regard to the neutrality legislation. One would scrap it altogether in the interest of a program of collective security. Another would retain it and enforce it in regard to both the wars in Asia and Spain. A third—and this is the position held by The New Republic—would retain it and apply it in the Far East, where the danger of involvement is large, but would amend it so that its provisions would not apply to civil wars, and specifically would allow the purchase of arms by the Spanish Loyalists. No real danger of becoming engaged in war would arise from this course. The administration, however, has adopted a position that will satisfy none of these bodies of opinion and is completely illogical. It will not ask Congress to repeal or amend the act. It will not ask for the right to allow exports of munitions to Spain. Secretary Hull has explicitly refused to change the government's policy in this respect. At the same time, however, he persists in declining to apply the law in reference to the major war now going on in China. We protest our interest in democracy and international morality, but act against that interest in the area where these things are now most threatened in Europe, and where we could express it without much peril. Any other course would be preferable. What honorable reason can there be for assisting in the suffocation of Spanish democracy while we threaten intervention in behalf of American interests across the Pacific?

Once More a Liberal Court

Two new Supreme Court decisions show how the Constitution can legitimately be interpreted to further the processes of democracy. The act requiring utility holding companies to register with the SEC before offering their securities on the market has been upheld in the case of Electric Bond and Share. A large number of the holding companies had already complied with the law, and now the rest must do so. It remains to be seen whether the utilities will be any more successful in their opposition to other features of the law, and especially to the requirement for dissolution of super-holding companies. On the other hand, the Court has safeguarded civil liberties in declaring unconstitutional an ordinance of Griffin, Georgia, that required persons to obtain a license to distribute circulars. Chief Justice Hughes, who wrote the opinion, declared that the law "strikes at the very foundation of the freedom of the press by subjecting it to license and censorship. . . . The liberty of the press . . . necessarily embraces pamphlets and leaflets. These indeed have been historic weapons in the defense of liberty, as the pamphlets of Thomas Paine . . . abundantly attest." The decision will be widely felt, since many local authorities have tried to suppress labor and political agitation by this means. Before the fight on the Court bill and the appointment of new Justices, these two decisions might easily have been in reverse. The Court used to be very careful of the business liberties of corporations, and careless of the civil liberties of individual citizens.

CONTENTS

The Week 259

Editorials
- Eleventh Hour in Spain 261
- Whitney and His Friends 262
- Reorganization Jitters 263

General Articles
- Shut Up That Russian Novel . Edmund Wilson 264
- Let's Get This Settled . . Beverley Bowie 267
- Czechoslovakia, Bastion of Europe . . . . . George Fielding Eliot 269
- Shoot the Works . . . Heywood Broun 282
- Washington Notes . . . . . T. R. B. 273
- Other People's Money . . John T. Flynn 274
- Movies: The Fat with the Lean . Otis Ferguson 275
- Fifty-eight Years of Progress (cartoon) . . . . . John Groth 276
- The Bandwagon 276

Correspondence 277

Books in Review
- In the Tradition from Emerson . . . . . F. O. Matthiessen 279
- Long Black Song . . . Malcolm Cowley 280
- Fashion Is a Business . . . Muriel Maurer 281
- The Search for Shakespeare . Otis Ferguson 281
- Those Cherry Blossoms . . Nathaniel Peffer 284
- New Books: A Reader's List 285

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What's the Super-Navy For?

Whispers are going around Washington seeking to explain the otherwise inexplicable super-navy bill. It is being said that these ships are not intended to be built but to be bargained with. By means of them, the President can enforce a new world conference for the limitation and reduction of armament. This is a pretty theory, but it does not fit the facts, among them the following: (1) the lamentable history of naval disarmament from 1922 to 1936, when at every conference hidden jokers were the order of the day; (2) the hopelessness of getting all the seven principal naval powers around another conference table at which these methods would be replaced by frankness and fairness; (3) the consequent futility, while Italy boasts of *mare nostrum*, while Japanese aggression in China continues, while the fruits of the apparent victory of the axis powers in Spain can be reaped only by control of maritime communications, of any fresh attempts at naval disarmament by agreement. The world's naval problems cannot be considered in watertight geographical compartments. The sooner our naïve statesmen grasp this essential truth, the sooner our naval policy will be established on a basis of sound defense rather than chimerical dreams of policing the world. In view of its lack of relation to our own defense needs, it is hard to believe that this gigantic program arises only from the desire to coerce the world into reduction.

The President and Secretary Hull have never really retreated from that desire to quarantine the aggressor that Mr. Roosevelt expressed in his Chicago speech. All the facts suggest that the super-navy is part of that plan. Only the surprisingly large and bitter opposition, inside and outside of Congress, has caused the project to be dressed up with such pretty notions as that it is defensive only and the new ships would be kept close to our shores, or that they are intended merely to be built, and scrapped, on paper.

Reversal in China

As the week closes, the military situation in China presents a prospect so remarkable that one hesitates to believe it. There seems a measurable possibility that within the next few days a great Japanese army will have been defeated in the open field by the Chinese under Marshal Chiang Kai-shek, with General Pai Chung-Hsi as the immediately responsible commander. Enveloping the left of the Japanese army which for days has been held up on the Grand Canal north of Suchow, General Pai's troops are reported storming the defenses of Tsaochwang. Meanwhile, under another Kwangsi general, Li Tsung-jen, Chinese forces are working round the Japanese right, and are reported threatening Yenchowfu on the Tientsin-Pukow railway, the main Japanese line of communications. Other Chinese forces have crossed the Yellow River and are attacking the Japanese in the vicinity of Fengkiu. If these attacks can be further developed, the Japanese army is in danger of a double envelopment.

Meanwhile, both in Shansi and on the southern front, strong Chinese holding attacks are preventing the Japanese from shifting more troops to the threatened point. The immediate issue apparently depends upon whether Generals Pai and Li can smash the desperate Japanese resistance before strong reinforcements, reported as on their way from the north, can arrive. The situation is quite unprecedented; not even in the Russo-Japanese war was any Japanese army in such imminent peril. It has frequently been remarked by foreign military observers that the Japanese have never been seriously defeated, and for that very reason a defeat might prove disastrous to their morale. A defeat at the hands of the despised Chinese might indeed have repercussions on Japanese morale that would extend beyond the ranks of the army. The Chinese generalship which has brought a Japanese army to this dangerous pass is admirable; it remains to be seen whether the Chinese army can reap its fruits. The Chinese infantry has proved its quality; if they have somehow acquired an artillery and an air force adequate in numbers and morale to support that infantry, next week's news from China may go far to offset the gloomy prospects in Spain.

Blackmailing Mexico About Oil

When Mexico last week took over her oil resources, under a law passed two decades ago, Washington dispatches indicated that the United States would not engage in coercive measures. However, this fine resolution seems to have lasted only a few days. Then came the announcement that on April 1 we would stop buying Mexican silver, thereby putting her economic organization under a tremendous strain. Our silver-buying policy is a foolish one; but the foolishness lies with us and not with Mexico. If we are going to stop buying, Mexico should be given reasonable warning, and our purchases tapered off. As it is, suspicion is bound to be felt that our action is a reprisal, due to pressure from American oil interests, the Catholic Church, the British government, or all three. Washington is said to be alarmed lest Mexico make arrangements with Japan to give her oil in exchange for engineering assistance in the construction of pipe lines, etc. Surely our bureaucrats must be aware that our present policy is likely to drive Mexico straight into the arms of Japan.

News Notes of a Week

Prime Minister Chamberlain, in his speech on foreign policy, hinted but did not say outright, that Great Britain might come to the aid of Czechoslovakia if attacked by Hitler. His attitude was of course intended to restrain Germany without making a definite pledge,

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but many observers found in it an ominous parallel with British policy before 1914. . . . As the Rebel forces smashed ahead in Spain, the British government offered no comment on a result for which its policy was primarily responsible. . . . Italy issued a sharp warning to France that if she should support the Loyalists as Italy supports the Rebels, there would be a general war. Commentators asked whether the urgency of the Italian statement meant that Mussolini knew of some French plan to come to the aid of Spain. . . . As the American Cardinals Hayes and O'Connell continued to praise Franco to the skies as the model of humanitarianism, the Pope for the second time in a few weeks tried to persuade the puppet leader to stop his merciless killing of civilians, a slaughter without military justification. Franco refused to desist.

At home, President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull suggested that oppressed minorities in all lands might find refuge in the United States. Quota restrictions are not to be lifted, but it is possible that the sabotage heretofore exercised by State Department officials against would-be immigrants may be abandoned. . . . The Senate voted for a congressional investigation of the TVA. . . . A conference of peace societies, meeting in Washington, after a long debate, voted not to approve the idea of using force against aggressor nations.

Eleventh Hour in Spain

THE MILITARY SITUATION of the Loyalist government in Spain is extremely grave. It is now possible to make a connected estimate of the Rebel offensive which began on March 9. In essence, it is an attempt to drive down the valley of the Ebro to the Mediterranean, thus cutting off industrial Catalonia from the rest of Loyalist Spain. Once this is achieved, the Ebro forms a central position from which further operations can be developed either to the north or south; the Ebro thus plays—in the strategical sense—much the same function as the Danube between Ulm and Ratisbon in 1796, when the Archduke Charles, possessed of the river crossings, was able to turn upon the French armies of Moreau and Jourdan consecutively and drive them both over the Rhine without permitting their junction.

The Ebro Valley itself affords the easiest road to the sea from the vicinity of Saragossa, the Rebel base. North of the river the terrain is accidented by hills, breaking away into the plains around Fraga and Lérida, through which, from the north, the rivers Cinca and Segre flow in a generally southerly direction into the Ebro. East of Lérida, the formidable coastal sierra rises as a last barrier before the lowlands along the sea are reached. South of the Ebro, the sierra inclines more to the westward. The principal crossings of the Ebro below Saragossa are the road bridges at Quinto and Caspe, and the railway and road bridges at Mora del Ebro and Tortosa.

The first phase of the Rebel offensive (south of the Ebro) gave them the first two of these crossings; last week they began developing the "main show" north of the Ebro. They moved simultaneously from Huesca, seventy kilometers north of Saragossa, and from Quinto, whence a motorized column crossed the river and moved east along the road toward Lérida.

On March 26 this column, under General Yague, occupied the road junction of Bujalaroz; from an eyewitness account (that of Herbert L. Matthews of The New York Times) we learn of apparently resolute preparations for defense suddenly crumbling under the Rebel tank attack. Yague pushed on the same day to Candasnas, where the road from Caspe joins the main Saragossa-Lérida highway. In the north General Berron pushed out from Huesca toward Barbastro and Sariñena, which places were still in Loyalist hands on the evening of March 27; it was only here, and in a secondary attack from Caspe toward Maella, that any serious resistance was encountered. But on the afternoon of March 27, a Rebel column drove across the Cinca south of the important town of Fraga, on the main road to Lérida, under cover of air attacks and heavy artillery fire; almost simultaneously Yague's men crossed the Cinca north of Fraga, and from the heights on the east bank saw the spires of Lérida in the distance. Since the east bank of the Cinca is much higher than the west, it might have been expected that the Loyalists would put up a strong fight to defend this river line—a serious tank obstacle in itself—but apparently they again gave way.

As these words are written, then, the Rebels are within fifteen miles of Lérida, the principal road and rail junction of Catalonia and the military "key" to the province. Once this place is in their hands they can move directly on Barcelona, but are more likely to continue down the Ebro Valley toward Tortosa or perhaps Tarragona, when they will have established the central position as suggested above and can operate as the situation requires. The river Segre, on which Lérida stands, and the coastal range, are the only barriers between the Rebel army and the coast.

Further, the Rebels are now holding the Montalban-Alcoriza-Caspe-Candasnas road; if Sariñena gives way, this will extend their control of this highway all the way up to Huesca. A road thus paralleling their new front they can use to shift their highly mobile forces to such points as seem advisable, thus maintaining the advantage of surprise and preventing Loyalist concentration. Lérida, however, seems now their immediate objective; and if Lérida falls, it is to be feared that the Loyalist cause falls with it. For if Lérida falls there is little hope of checking Franco's march to the sea; once there, not only will he possess a tremendously advantageous military position, but he will have

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deprived Loyalist Spain of the industries of Catalonia, so essential to its already scanty munitionment.

The reasons for the Rebel success may be briefly summed up: (1) superiority in material, especially in artillery, tanks and motorized equipment; (2) air superiority, not only a most formidable battle weapon but impeding Loyalist reconnaissance; the merciless use of bombers against civilian centers has also featured the Rebel campaign; (3) superior communications, enabling them to shift troops from front to front and to bring up reserves to exploit success, while the Loyalists had to use circuitous routes; (4) superior discipline and troop-leading, born of the fact that the flower of the Loyalist troops and a high proportion of their war-experienced regimental officers fell at Teruel; (5) an excellent and well worked-out plan, bearing the stamp of the methods of Marshal Badoglio (attack on a wide front, consecutive blows at different points, swift exploitation of success); (6) last, and worst, the all-too-evident collapse of Loyalist morale.

Of course there is still a little hope. A question arises in one's mind—where is the Loyalist army? Where are the troops who fought so gallantly at Brunete, Belchite, Teruel? Surely Teruel did not dispose of them all. The Rebels report the capture of comparatively few prisoners. In Upper Aragon the resistance has been stiff; is a counter-strike developing in the Pyrenean sector, when perhaps Franco's overeager generals extend their lines too far? Or in the south, via the Morella road? In almost every great offensive in the World War, the leading troops far outran their supports and counter-attacks became increasingly effective as the drive went on. One remembers the great German effort of the spring of 1918—then, too, all seemed lost and there were reports of widespread demoralization. And yet at last that drive was stopped—it died before it reached Amiens or the Channel ports; and when it died, the last hope of German victory died with it. Franco is widely extended, has not nearly enough troops for the vast gains of territory he has made—if the Loyalists have not lost all cohesion, all courage, all organized fighting power, if the government itself has not become demoralized, lost control of the situation, deprived the army of the firm direction of a high command. If it has, French or British intervention is the one remaining hope.

One wonders what they are thinking in Whitehall tonight, if they recall that in 1705 and 1808 British armies went to Spain to keep that strategic area from the hands of a predatory power. Spain still commands the British Empire's vital communications; but, unlike the armies of Louis IV or Napoleon, the communications of the foreign conquerors in Spain today lie at the mercy of the British fleet. Do they remember that too in Whitehall on this night in 1938, when the troops of a new Napoleon stand in triumph on the heights of the Cinca looking down upon the key to Catalonia?

Whitney and His Friends

THE MORE WE HEAR about the case of Richard Whitney, the more desirable it seems that it should be probed to the bottom. To put the matter bluntly, Wall Street is making a desperate effort to cover the matter up, to stop the investigation, and especially to keep the finger of suspicion pointed only at the central figure. It will be tragic if Wall Street succeeds. There are still some urgent questions to be asked.

For example, there is the matter of the million-dollar fund created to protect widows and orphans of Exchange members. Bigwigs of the Exchange are appointed trustees to safeguard this fund. Government authorities now believe that some, at least, of these trustees have used their power over the fund so as to give themselves commissions, and have rotated the fund from one trustee to another for their personal benefit. This is why, according to a seemingly well informed article in the Scripps-Howard newspapers, the securities of the fund were in Richard Whitney's hands instead of in a safe place. They should have been turned over to another man last summer, but he was unable to get them until November. This incident proved, or should have proved, to Exchange leaders that something was wrong. If they knew, why did they not act? If they did not know, how can they explain their incredible ignorance?

Their ignorance was equally incredible regarding manipulation of a listed stock in which Whitney's firm created a corner. The firm then kept the market price abnormally high and borrowed money on it at this excessive valuation. This is the oldest, most obvious, most often denounced procedure of all the sharp practices of Wall Street; yet the Exchange members heard nothing, saw nothing, said nothing.

Richard Whitney's brother, George, a member of the firm of J. P. Morgan, having already loaned his brother $2,000,000, last November gave him another million. In spite of this, the records do not indicate that he suspected anything was wrong. If he knew, of course, it was his duty to force his brother off the Exchange and out of his positions of trust in it.

The New York Trust Company is a big bank within the sphere of influence of J. P. Morgan and Company. It lent Richard Whitney money on the security of his vast country estate and agreed to conceal the fact that the property had been mortgaged. Did the bank suspect nothing was wrong? If so, what a naïve, what an innocent, what a trusting attitude it took!

If you would know how Wall Street would like to have the Whitney failure regarded, read the files of The New York Sun. From day to day, it wrote sob stories about Whitney, it exonerated everyone else, it praised him for taking his medicine, it argued that the system of which he was a part could not have pre-

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vented the wrong he did and certainly was innocent of conspiring with him in that wrong. The New York Times, like The Sun, is a wealthy, conservative paper, but it could not swallow this sort of thing without gulping. It said bluntly that the SEC "is interesting itself in the possibility that the Whitney insolvency was an open secret to many who might have felt themselves bound to report it had personal considerations been otherwise."

Serious as were Richard Whitney's own acts, in our judgment the attitude of others in Wall Street is even more serious. We are convinced that careful investigation would show a loss of a sense of responsibility, a willingness to help one of the inner group at the expense of the public, that will shock the nation.

Reorganization Jitters

ONE OF THE STRANGEST political phenomena of our day is the heated fight against the administration bill for governmental reorganization. This apparently prosaic project has been inflated with hysterical fears; it is supposed by the opponents of the President to embody his dictatorial tendencies and to lead directly to fascism. Opposition to it is invested with constitutional sanctity; this controversy is supposed to be a logical successor to the Supreme Court battle. What is the fuss and fury all about?

The executive agencies of the government have never been subjected to a general appraisal and overhauling since the nation was founded. Many studies of their duplications and illogical arrangement have been made, with recommendations for improvement. Virtually all Presidents since William Howard Taft, who first made a major issue of the subject, have attempted to obtain action in this direction. But Congress has consistently declined to act. The reason is that the vested interests of Congressmen in patronage, and of separate bureaus in their own prerogatives, have always prevailed against the public interest in efficiency. Students of the subject have come to the conclusion that nothing would ever be done unless the President were given authority to do it.

The present administration appointed a committee of experts to draw up a plan for reorganization. Their report was duly rendered and has been before the country for many months. The bill now before Congress gives the President power to act according to their recommendations. Under it he can propose to shift or abolish bureaus, and in general to harmonize the executive functions. His proposal will, when it is complete, lie before Congress for sixty days. If Congress does not act on it, it then automatically goes into effect. Congress may, if it so desires, vote down the proposal. The President may then veto this rejection. Congress may, as always, repass its resolution over the presidential veto by a two-thirds vote. If two-thirds cannot be mustered, however, the veto stands and the plan goes into effect. We see no threat to the democratic process in this ample opportunity for debate and rejection—not half so much threat as in the continuance of an inefficient executive organization. If, after thirty years' consideration of the subject, the republic cannot muster the will power to clean its executive house, democracy will be vulnerable to the taunt always leveled against it by dictators that it can never act but only quibble and postpone; that it is too inefficient to meet the requirements of the modern world.

The opposition has centered its fire against two technical details of the new plan—the substitution of an Auditor General for the Comptroller General, and the substitution of a one-man head for the Civil Service Commission. The Comptroller General is supposed to examine proposed expenditures submitted to him by executive departments, to see whether they comply with the law, and has the power to stop them if he thinks they do not do so. By use of this power Comptroller General McCarl set himself up as a little autocrat from whom there was no appeal, balking in many instances not only the plans of executive agencies but the will of Congress as well. The new idea is to substitute for this arbitrary power the function of examining expenditures and reporting to Congress those that the Auditor General believes outside the scope of law. Congress may then stop them if it agrees with him. Certainly the change is in a democratic direction. The old "watch-dog of the Treasury" was approved mainly by those who disliked expenditures and policies that Congress wanted. As for the Civil Service Commission, substitution of a single responsible head would greatly facilitate desirable reforms in the civil service, to make it more responsive to the need for promotion on merit, for flexibility and efficiency in the new responsibilities of government.

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Shut Up That Russian Novel

THE SOVIET UNION is an immense expanse of territory, including the extremes of geographical contrast and inhabited by some hundred and seventy-five million people of varying races, social antecedents and degrees of education. These people, like people elsewhere, are compelled to make considerable exertions in order to survive in their environment; and when they are not eating, drinking or starving, quarreling or copulating, idling or amusing themselves, they devote a certain amount of attention to organizing representative bodies for the purpose of safeguarding their social groups and to elaborating disciplines and devices to make possible their higher development.

These statements seem obvious enough; but if all that you knew about Russia were derived from our political press, you would hardly have gained any inkling of them. The name of the Soviet Union, for all its millions of souls, has ceased to signify a real section of the earth. It has become a battle-cry, a term of abuse, a counter in a political game.

All this is because in this particular area an attempt has been lately going forward to vary the forms of social organization in such a way as to make it possible for all the people to share in the facilities for higher development instead of allowing these facilities to be controlled by certain specialized members of the community, who enjoy them at the expense of the others.

During the period just after the Russian Revolution, the USSR was a bugbear: all the hundred and forty million Russians were supposed to be something called Communists—that is, greedy and murderous barbarians who wanted to take people's Ford cars away from them. Then gradually the Soviet Union came to represent for the American Left intelligentsia the realization of the ideal modern community: American technical efficiency and democracy plus socialist elimination of unearned profits. For many Jews it has figured their millennial hopes; for the Stalinists it has tended to be a war-cry with which they have deafened themselves; for the Trotskyists it has tended to mean a place which would be wonderful if Trotsky were there; for the Communists in general it is a slogan in the struggle against the capitalist world; for the Marxists in general the keystone of a thesis—that is, of an intellectual construction which enables the designer to feel smug without studying or involving himself in reality. More recently it has come more and more, on the part of dissatisfied middle-class persons, to be a pretext for making oneself disagreeable, for feeling comfortably superior to one's neighbors or for experiencing a vicarious sadism. For the liberals, it has always been a piece in a game as simple as checkers, which the liberals play in their minds. The checkers in this game are either white or black—that is, either desirable or undesirable. In the case of the Soviet Union, it has at times been a little bit difficult to make sure whether the checker which represents it belongs to our side or to that of our opponents. It used to be thought to be definitely black; then it was thought to be definitely white. Now it is causing trouble by becoming more and more unmanageable for the appropriate moves of a white checker: some continue to try to play the game on the assumption that the piece is still white; others have suddenly decided it is black.

And in the meantime the one hundred and seventy-five million people, who know as well as you and I that they are people and not a bogey, a utopia, a millennium, a slogan, a thesis, a neurosis or a checker either black or white, are experiencing all the same sensations that make other human beings content or miserable and taking part in a social drama of immense importance and interest.

What is happening in Russia is interesting; but few people really exert themselves to look into it. There are, it is true, certain difficulties in the way; but it is possible to find out a good deal more than you might imagine from the political journals. People would much rather cherish their myths than give attention to such reports as are available and try to draw from them objective conclusions.

Lately a number of adverse reports have been published—Fred Beal, Eugene Lyons, Victor Serge—which have contained a certain amount of information on recent happenings in the Soviet Union, but which have had the effect of producing a new myth: the myth of the False Revolution. The writer of the present article has even been taken to task by Mr. Lyons in The Saturday Review of Literature for describing the statue of Lenin in the lobby of an opera-house in Leningrad as having "a look both piercing and genial, at once as if he were giving back to labor what it had made and inviting it to share for the first time in its heritage of human culture, and as if he were opening out to humanity as a whole a future of which for the first time they were to recognize themselves the masters, with the power to create without fear whatever they had minds to imagine." These ideas, asserts Mr. Lyons, are certainly not "Mr. Lenin's" but "Mr. Wilson's." Yet these ideas *were* certainly Lenin's: he was expounding them all his life. And the statue in the opera was a good one, into which the sculptor had put some such feeling as I had attempted to render in words.

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What is causing Mr. Lyons to talk now as if there had never been anything to Lenin, as if the Revolution had all been an error? If the Bolsheviks had not announced during the first years of their power the aims which I have imputed to Lenin, Mr. Lyons would never have gone to the Soviet Union and propagandized so earnestly in its favor. His reaction now from 100-percent loyalty takes the form of 100-percent disapproval. He thinks that he has simply made a terrible mistake. In other words, he is as biased as before. His book, "Assignment in Utopia," interesting and valuable as it is, is a monody of complaint and disaster. There is little attempt—and this is true of Chamberlin, too—really to understand the Russians, to explain in terms of Russian character and wider historical analogy the development of the Bolshevik Revolution. Mr. Lyons is disappointed and angry and won't play with the Russians any more. He will make no effort to form a realistic opinion. It will take centuries, he tells us (I quote him from memory), for humanity to digest such an event. Well, that may be true for the long-view historian; but for us at the present time the Soviet Union is part of our lives, one of the big values of the world in which we find ourselves; and we must not only be as well informed as possible about it, we must try to judge it as coolly as possible.

One of the most enlightening pieces of evidence on recent conditions in Russia seems to me a book called "Un Mineur Français Chez les Russes" (Paris: Editions Pierre Tisné) by a French trade unionist named Kléber Legay, who visited the Soviet Union in the autumn of 1936. M. Legay is a militant leader, who had been critical of the Stakhanovist methods for increasing production in Russia and who was induced by his Communist colleagues to go and see for himself.

He was promised full freedom to travel where he pleased and to talk personally with the Russian miners; but he found that, as soon as he arrived, he was taken in hand by a guide and held for eight days in Moscow. He was compelled, very much against his inclination, to march in a parade reviewed by Stalin. The French delegates, however, refused positively either to keep step or to sing. In the factories he visited at this time, he discovered that the accounts of rates of pay which had been given him by the guides and officials were invariably contradicted by the actual testimony of the workers; and that when the authorities became aware of the persistency with which he was checking up, they would not let him see any more factories.

At last he was taken, as he had been promised, to the Don Basin; but when he had arrived there, never allowed to leave the train, on which he lived and slept, except under the usual escort. Same discrepancy between fact and announcement. Contrary to what he had been told by his guide, he found women at the bottom of the mines doing the heaviest kind of work. Underground work by women has been forbidden, he says, in all other, including the fascist, countries. At the mouth of the mine young men with guns were standing guard over women and men of sixty; at the bottom were more men with guns, who were squatting in the darkness of a corner and seemed to be trying to conceal themselves from the visitors. A mine worker's home which he insisted upon exploring revealed an exceedingly low standard of living. The family told him that they earned more money but lived worse than before the Revolution; and one of the officials put a stop to this by glaring fiercely and speaking sharply to the husband. Later, they told M. Legay that the man had been drunk, though he had not at the time been able to observe any signs of it. As for the Stakhanovists, they had been raised out of the rank and file and given a psychology, like that of Ford service men, of employees on the fringes of the governing groups. They were the equivalent of our "loyal workers."

M. Legay was at pains to ascertain how wages and programs of work were determined. He says that the mine administration makes out a budget for each mine and that if the workers find that the part allotted to them does not amount to a living wage, their only possible redress is to prove that money can be saved from other expenses—in which case they may appropriate the difference. If they are unable to establish this to the satisfaction of the mine administration, they must simply go to work at the wages prescribed. They have, of course, no right to strike; and the young men with guns are there to prevent them from attempting to do so. In the case of the planning of production, the Party and the union officials, themselves completely controlled by the Party, are apparently all-powerful and final. The engineers have very little to say; but they are made responsible for the carrying out of the program. If the program proves impossible of execution, they are accused of sabotage and shot.

Determined pressure was exerted on M. Legay, before he had had a chance to visit the mines, to extract from him a general endorsement of the achievements of the Soviet Union. But he refused to give out statements or make speeches, and even insisted on drinking toasts in water.

Yet even here, where we unquestionably have an expert foreign opinion on workers' conditions in the Soviet Union, M. Legay—like Mr. Chamberlin and Mr. Lyons—tends to judge what he saw in Russia on the basis of the standards of more advanced countries plus an ideal of socialist society. In France, he declares, whole departments which had been devastated during the War were reconstructed under the capitalistic system in less than ten years' time, whereas in Russia the roads were still bad, the houses crude, the people dirty, after twenty years of what was supposed to be socialism.

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The point is that complaints of this kind are out of order in writing about Russia. The tone of these books is wrong. One has to take into account what Russia was like before the Revolution. The roads were always bad; the people were always dirty. They had no standards to restore like the French.

And so with the new social structure of Russia, which turns out, for people like M. Legay, to present so different an aspect from what he expected. It is quite obvious that the Soviet Union has developed a new class stratification; but this phenomenon should be studied, not denounced. Why was such a development inevitable? What conclusions should we draw from it about Marxist theory?

Marx and Lenin accurately foresaw that the old class stratification of society would carry over into socialist society in the shape of varying privileges and rates of pay, made unavoidable by the varying abilities and habits of human beings who had been bred under the old system. In other words, you could not get, say, a physician to contribute to the creation of the communist humanity if you fed him and lodged him like a peasant. Karl Marx had tended to concentrate his attention on the future of the Western countries in which the development of bourgeois industry and "democracy" had already run its full course. In his last years, he was making special efforts to study the case of Russia at the instigation of Russian revolutionaries who had asked him whether a feudal country like theirs might not skip some of the steps of Marxist development, go straight from village communism to socialist collectivism. Later on, Lenin did try to skip them, but, with bitter laments over the shortcomings of his countrymen, was forced to allow capitalist trade some further scope through the measures of the New Economic Period. But he never, so far as I know, foresaw that in a society which was just struggling out of feudalism and which was only beginning to master machinery and to claim the career open to the talents, the natural growth of the same social phenomena which are characteristic of the bourgeois countries would prove stronger than any possible socialist principles. In the Soviet Union today, twenty years after the Bolshevik Revolution, they seem to have evolved, just as we have in the United States, a system of government by political bosses, an industrial and financial exploitation of those who have only muscle by those who have clever wits, and a general low level of public intelligence based on the average mentality of a community which has only recently learned to read and write.

It also seems evident that the Stalinist administration has become definitely reactionary and corrupt. One suspects that Stalin himself may already belong to the past, that he may have been captured by the group he has created. I wonder that more has not been made editorially of the fact that the secret police in Russia seems to be turning up at the top of the heap. The anniversary of the GPU was celebrated in the Bolshoi Theatre in a peculiar and sensational way; the occasion was signalized by the execution of eight officials, including distinguished Old Bolsheviks like Yenukidze and Karakhan. Not long afterwards the announcement was made of a vast program of public works to be undertaken by the secret police and executed by convict labor. The countenance of Comrade Yezhov, the scourge of oppositionist betrayers, who has recently supplanted Yagoda as the head of this organization, is beginning to appear on the front page of Pravda in the place formerly reserved for Comrade Stalin; and Stalin himself, who, in spite of his apotheosis, has always tended, in his public appearances, to be quiet and self-effacing, now gets spot-lighted at public assemblies in a way which suggests that he may really have become less important.

But even assuming the worst, there is no point in getting indignant about it. One ought to look, not for villains, but for causes. Evasion of responsibility is one of the Russian vices: the Russians so dread making decisions that they usually pass them on, if possible, to the authorities higher up; thus they produce their own despots. And closely involved with this evasion of responsibility is the national tendency to lie, which verges upon and merges into the oriental. The difficulty which they seem always to have experienced in meeting a situation squarely, in responding with a straight answer to a straight question, even in depending on their own constancy of purpose, has greatly complicated their industry and their politics. The shifting moods and susceptible imaginations which have enabled them to produce such great novelists and dramatists, such great actors and great composers, have rather unfitted them for statesmanship and organization. There is another side to the brutality of the governing groups, a side which most of the critics of the Stalin administration fail to mention: the public spirit of those more conscientious, more systematic or more energetic persons who have undertaken to make themselves responsible for seeing to it that things get done. How such persons are faring at the present time in relation to the racketeers of the Revolution, it is impossible for a foreigner to know; but one must remember that they at least have existed and that it is improbable they have all been suppressed.

One must also remember that the Soviet Union has suffered terribly for her socialist principles; and that her political ills have been aggravated by the isolation which the announcement of those principles has incurred. Here the Russian imagination has played a role of a kind which might perhaps have been impossible for a more prosaic or practical people: if the Soviets have been bogging down at this bad moment for all the world through Russian mechanical and

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executive incompetence, if they have been betrayed by Russian bureaucratism and deviousness, they have at least been the first to introduce into the domain of actual statesmanship, to impress ineffaceably on the mind of the world the ideal of the classless society. But it has been partly the fault of this very imagination if we have made of the Soviet Union a myth: we have been under the spell of the Soviet publicity as we were formerly under that of the Russian novels. Yet it is most important at the present time to try to see the Soviet Union realistically: we do not want, for example, to go to war against Japan for a myth called "the Workers' Fatherland" any more than we want to expend all our energy fighting a mythical and morbid obsession called "Stalin." The Russians, after taking as many losses in the interests of ideal revolutionary ends as any people can be expected to do, seem to have settled down for the present to a new kind of stratified society dominated by a new governing class. The situation deserves sympathetic but soberly sociological attention. So long as we persist in imagining those one hundred and seventy-five million people as either a New Jerusalem or a nightmare, we shall be unable to see our own one hundred and thirty million people, we shall be unable to see ourselves. Let us shut up that Russian novel.[1]

EDMUND WILSON

Let's Get This Settled

IN THE PAST YEAR OR TWO, we have heard a most inordinate amount of beefing in Congress, in the press and in the nation's barbershops about labor's irresponsibility before the law, and about the necessity of incorporating unions. Much of this prattle has stemmed from disingenuous sources, from industrial rajahs who are themselves no more responsible in the larger social relationships than drunken peanut-vendors. But many liberal and honest-minded citizens, too, have been chivvied into believing that there exists a legal imbalance today which leaves to a union the unrestricted rights of extortion, mayhem and breach of trust, while shackling the employer to a rigid code of behavior. And it is in the interests of these sincere if muddled persons that we should at once clear up this great mess of misconceptions—not with any partisan desires, but simply to get at the chilly legal facts.

For purposes of exposition and enlightenment, then, let's repair to Smother Hall, where under some potted palms and the auspices of the Sons and Daughters of the Constitution, Senator Horatio Bellow is addressing a large audience of the faithful upon "Labor and the Law—Whither?" As we stumble across other people's knees to our seats, we gather that we have come a little late: the Senator is just winding up his peroration—

"—for it is an iniquitous thing—yes, I say iniquitous advisedly—to have one law for the employer and one law for the union. Both, I say, both must answer before the bar of justice! If the employer is to be sued and harassed and persecuted for breaking a labor contract, why then, the union also must be liable to penalties. But as the law stands now, the union goes scot-free, and you cannot touch its funds. Only incorporation will make the union liable for its corporate acts. Ladies and gentlemen, I tell you that until we make every union in this country an incorporated union, there is no justice, there is no equity, and contracts between labor and capital will not be worth the paper they're printed on! I thank you."

Amid the rocketing applause, in which everyone joins, the chairman of the meeting rises and announces that there will be a brief question period during which Senator Bellow will be glad to answer any—

"Well, I've got a question," barks an unpleasant voice from the mid-orchestra section, and a rather objectionable-looking man in pince-nez gets to his feet.

The Chairman: "Proceed."

The Heckler: "Isn't it true that if a union repudiates a contract or any of its terms, the employer can get an injunction in a court of equity which will forbid any such act by the union?"

Senator Bellow: "Well, sir, I hadn't thought much about that. . . . Yes, I suppose he could get such an injunction."

The Heckler: "And isn't it true that if a union strikes, thus abrogating the agreement, the employer can sue the union's officers for full damages?"

Senator Bellow: "Now look here, I'm not a lawyer—"

The Heckler: "So I see. But you're talking about the law, and making laws yourself. Will you answer my question?"

Senator Bellow: "All right, suppose what you say is true—"

The Heckler: "It is true. Look up the Danbury Hatters case."

Senator Bellow: "I will not. But even if you're right, what of it? What good would it do to sue three or four officers who have only $22.50 between them?"

The Heckler: "It would demoralize the leadership. And you could also sue any member who voted for the strike or illegal action. But no matter. Isn't it also true that you can sue the union as a whole and attach all the union funds?"

Senator Bellow: "Certainly not! At least, that's what everyone I know in Congress says. And those

[1] It has become more trashy since this article was written. Comrade Yezhov is degrading the tradition of Gogol.

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columnists, Pegler and Lippmann and the rest: they must know the law on the subject, and they all say you can't sue an unincorporated union, therefore—"

The Heckler: "Then it should be made compulsory for Congressmen and columnists alike to count up to sixty before they say anything. They might even go so far as to read up on what they're discussing."

Senator Bellow: "Let's not get personal. Are they right or wrong?"

The Heckler: "Astoundingly wrong. Back in 1922 the Supreme Court decided in United Mine Workers v. Coronado Coal Company that 'such organizations [as unions] are suable in the federal courts for their acts, and that funds accumulated to be expended in conducting strikes are subject to execution in suits for torts committed by such unions. . . .'"

Senator Bellow: "But that's only in case the union's action interrupts the employer's interstate commerce."

The Heckler: "Quite so, but the recent Supreme Court decisions upholding the application of the Wagner Act have interpreted this 'interruption' very broadly. As long as the goods are eventually shipped outside the state—and what goods aren't these days?—then their production is an interstate matter, and its interruption by an illegal strike becomes a federal offense."

Senator Bellow: "Hrmph. . . . Damme, it looks as if the employer were protected on all sides: by an injunction if it's an *intra*state matter, and by a full damage suit if it's *inter*state. I never knew that."

The Heckler: "Well, you know it now. And another thing—"

Senator Bellow: "Oh, lay off, will you? I feel stupid enough already before all these people, being contradicted right and left—"

The Chairman: "If you'll just excuse me—I'm feeling a little faint from all this chatter—"

The Heckler: "Oh, no, you don't. You stay right here. There isn't much more. Now, Senator, you were saying a while ago that we ought to make unions incorporate—as British law compels them to do in England."

Senator Bellows: "Yes, I've found that a very popular talking point. They have such nice unions in England."

The Heckler: "Well, I can see only one hitch: there isn't any British law compelling unions to incorporate."

Senator Bellow: "What!"

The Heckler: "None whatever. A union may "register" if it likes—just as it may incorporate if it chooses over here."

Senator Bellow: "Then it must be possible to attach their funds in some other way."

The Heckler: "On the contrary, Senator, the Trades Disputes Act of 1926 expressly states that no court shall entertain any suit against a union nor attach its funds, no matter what it has done."

Senator Bellow: "Dear lord, this is all very confusing. It can't mean that our laws against union activities are actually stronger than England's. . . . But what about strikes? Don't they restrict the right to strike?"

The Heckler: "They prohibit only two kinds of strike—a strike designed to coerce or overthrow the government, and a "sympathetic" strike by another union not involved in the dispute. Whereas in the United States we have plenty of state laws prohibiting all sorts of strikes—such as a strike for a closed shop. And we have laws against union boycotts, laws that the English never heard of."

Senator Bellow: "All right, all right; call off the dogs. I grant you all that, but what about all this labor racketeering? What about that, huh?"

The Heckler: "But what good will incorporation do? Or any new laws? In every state we have laws that adequately cover cases of fraud, coercion and blackmail, and all the federal laws on top of them. What we need is not new laws, but enforcement of the ones we have. Isn't that what the Dewey prosecutions in New York prove?"

Senator Bellow: "I suppose so. But listen here, what about union violence, what about all those cases of intimidation and beatings-up and so forth by unions that you read about?"

The Heckler: "It's the same case as racketeering: you don't need any new laws; you only need the old ones enforced. All those acts of violence are covered by the statutes of the common law."

The Chairman: "Gentlemen, I think the audience is getting a little restive, so I suggest that you conclude your remarks and—"

Senator Bellow: "One moment, Mr. Chairman. I've stood for more heckling this evening than ever before in my career, and now, by the lord Harry, I think this thorn-in-the-flesh down there should be asked to come up on the platform and tell us something constructive for a change. Mr. Heckler, suppose you tell us how we can obtain labor's responsibility?"

(There is a little bustle and stir as The Heckler struggles up through the crowd to the rostrum.)

The Heckler: "I'll make this brief, ladies and gentlemen. We can obtain a responsible labor movement, not by laws, which we have in superfluity already and to which we Americans too lazily resort, but by recognizing the unions, by encouraging collective bargaining and by stimulating labor to join in the mutual adventure of production. If you fight labor, labor will fight you. But if you coöperate with labor, labor will coöperate with you. That is common sense, and good human sense. And it is good historical sense, for we have always found in every nation that those unions which were earliest recognized and earliest contracted, were the most conservative, the most collaborative and the most responsible unions in the country. Thank you very much."

BEVERLEY BOWIE

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Czechoslovakia, Bastion of Europe

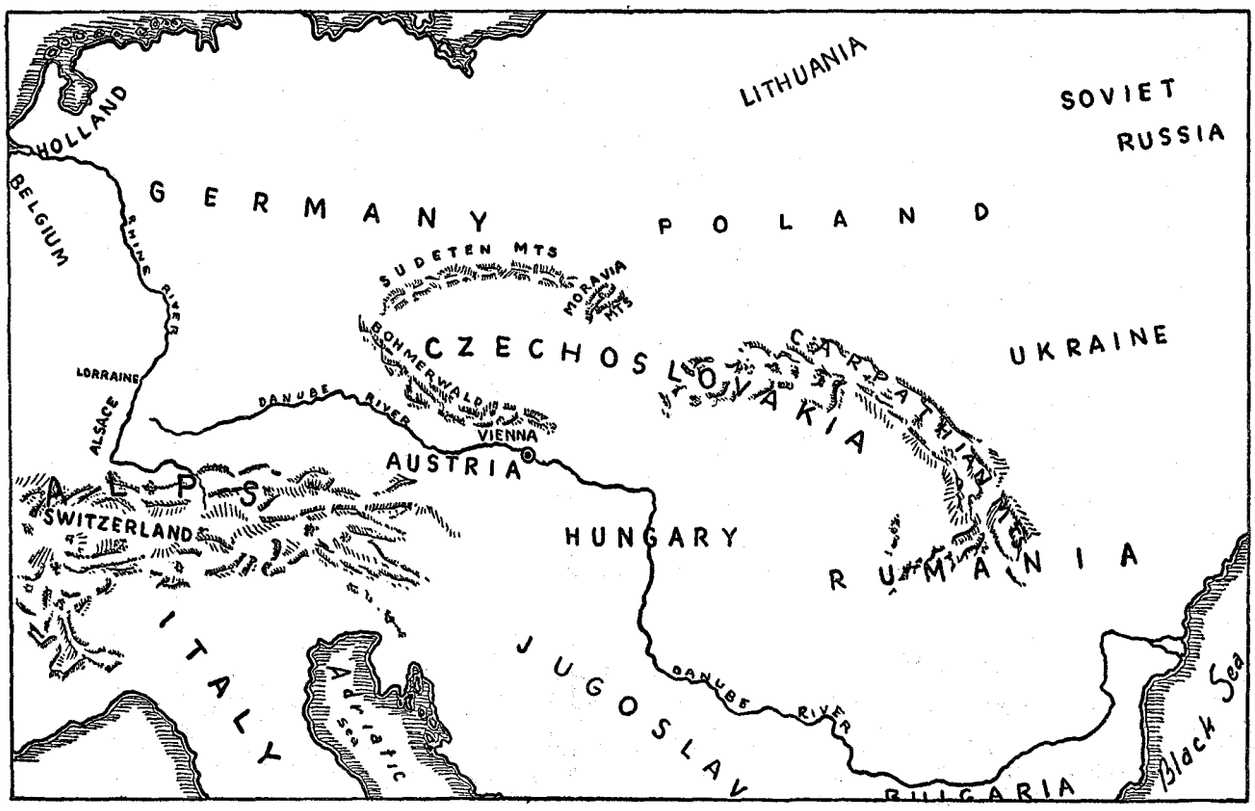
"He who holds Bohemia," Bismarck once said, "is master of Europe." It is a statement strategically accurate—almost, in view of present developments, tragically accurate. For Czechoslovakia stands today on the flank of the German "Drang nach Osten"; while Czechoslovakia lives, the oil of Rumania and the wheat of the Ukraine are but dreams for eager Nazis.

Let the reader look at a map of Europe: not a political, but a physical map. Note the great mountain barrier which divides Central Europe from the northern and western parts of the continent. The left flank of that barrier is the Alpine mass, beginning at the Gulf of Lions and sweeping round through Switzerland to the Danube; the right flank is formed by the Carpathians, covering the Danubian plain from the Black Sea to the Moravian Gate. The center, thrusting out to the northwest like the outwork of a fortification, is the Bohemian plateau, covered on the north by the Sudeten range, on the west and south by the Bohmerwald (facing the Danube) and with its rear defended by the Moravian hills.

Through this mountain barrier into the Danubian plain, and so onward to the Black Sea, there are but two main passages: that of the Danube Valley between the Alps and the Bohmerwald, and the Moravian Gate between the Sudetes and the Carpathians. Both are flanked by the great "fortress of Bohemia." If Bohemia be held by a power actually or potentially hostile, no German advance to the eastward by either passage can ever be secure.

The German rape of Austria has brought her possession of the Danubian gateway; she is on the verge of the Central European plain. But no permanent advance, no enduring German economic and political system can be established here until the flanking fortress has been reduced. Just so did the fortress of Plevna, commanding the one practicable crossing of the Danube, not directly but by means of Osman Pasha's army, hold up the Russian advance on Constantinople in 1877. Plevna had to be reduced before the seemingly open road to the Turkish capital could be traversed. A fortress is not of itself a barrier to advance along a route which it flanks; it is by acting as a base, as a pivot of maneuver for a field army, that it operates to close such routes. Otherwise it has no power beyond the very limited range of its guns. The Bohemian Plateau, acting as a fortress in a larger sense, forms in very truth the bastion of Central Europe against a German incursion to the south and east. The immediate German military problem of the "Drang nach Osten," then, is the reduction of the Bohemian fortress. Germany's acquisition of Austria brings her around three sides of this crucial position.

But it has been overlooked, in much of the gloomy prediction which has followed a general realization of



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this ominous fact, that the Germany army of 1938 is quite a different force from that of 1914. For sixteen years—from 1919 to 1935—there was no compulsory military service in Germany; there was no annual class of recruits returning home from the colors to form the great reservoir of trained reservists upon which a modern army depends. During this period, the German army consisted of 100,000 men, enlisted for twelve years' service; most of those men, the famous Reichswehr, are non-commissioned officers today. They form the backbone of the new German army, to which have been added the classes of recruits called up from 1935 onwards for two years' training. Each class includes about 325,000 young men. The 1935 class was dismissed to the reserve in October, 1937; they are the only fully trained reserves that Germany possesses at this moment. The 1936 and 1937 classes are with the colors; the active German army of about 800,000 includes these two classes, the old Reichswehr and some 50,000 men of the former "Security Police," who were incorporated into the army at the time of the remilitarization of the Rhineland. To this may be added the one available class of reservists, an aggregate of 1,125,000 men. There are some hundreds of thousands of S.S. and S.A. men, who have received some training and could be employed as replacements; but they have not the training, or the arms, or the organization to function as army units in the field against a well organized and munitioned enemy.

The German army has certain other defects that are born of the Versailles period of disarmament. It is woefully short of junior officers, having not more than a third of the number it requires; it will take years to fill the gap. There is also a serious shortage of artillery, especially of medium and heavy guns. The army is organized in thirty-six divisions, plus three or four "armored" divisions. There are not enough reservists to permit the creation of any reserve divisions at present.

About the actual strength of the German air force much secrecy has been maintained; probably that very fact has caused exaggerated reports to be spread abroad. For military purposes, all that are actually available are planes assigned to operating squadrons, fully manned and organized. It takes longer to train a military pilot than it takes to build a plane for him to fly. Sifting all available information, it seems probable that the immediately available planes number about 2,000; a high proportion of these are bombers.

So much for the potential assailants of the Bastion of Europe; now let us look at the defenders.

First of all, the Sudeten-Deutsch and their Nazi organization form an interior peril which must be taken into account. There can be little question that careful plans have been laid for operations by armed bands of these gentry against railways, bridges, tunnels, airports, munitions factories and other military objectives. But there can be little question, either, that precautions are well in hand to deal with such attempts. The extent of the peril cannot be judged without complete knowledge of these counter-plans. This much said, we may proceed to examine the armed forces of Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovak army has had no such training hiatus as has the German. From the passage of the first Defense Act in 1920, it has trained each year a full class of reservists. Its active strength is approximately 200,000; there are 1,600,000 trained reservists. The total trained manpower of Czechoslovakia is therefore superior to that of Germany. The army is organized in seventeen divisions (including one mountain division) and one cavalry division; sixteen additional reserve divisions would be formed on mobilization. The army is exceptionally well supplied with weapons and munitions; it has plenty of artillery of all calibers. An armored division is in course of formation. Czechoslovak industry is able to meet the needs of the army while assured a continuous flow of raw materials; Czechoslovakia is by no means a self-sufficient state. The quality of the enlisted personnel is good, on the average, though racial heterogeneity is a doubtful factor here. Training is of the first quality, the officer corps is unsurpassed by any small army of Europe, and French military missions have helped organize an efficient staff and administrative services.

The defenses of the mountain-wall of Bohemia have been made very strong; reliance has been put on a system of mutually supporting positions, connected by concrete pill-boxes and field fortifications, rather than any such solid and massive affair as the French Maginot Line, which would in any case be unsuited to the terrain. The principal avenues of approach from Germany—the Moravian Gateway, the Elbe Valley, the Glatz-Nachod approach from Breslau and the Cham-Taust approach from Nuremberg—are heavily defended. Toward Austria, the Moravian hills form a barrier where new defenses are being constructed.

A great advantage of the defender of the Bohemian plateau against an encircling enemy such as Germany is the ability to operate on interior lines. The mountains and the forts can be relied on to check the first enemy advances; the development of the situation will quickly make it apparent where the main blow is to fall; this can then be met by powerful reserve forces, moved to the threatened point from central positions by the excellent Bohemian network of roads and railways. To the east, however, in Slovakia and Carpatho-Russia, the road-and-rail net is nothing like so extensive; this might be a hindrance both to mobilization and defense in these areas. The Czechoslovak air force today is probably approaching a strength of 1,000 planes in operating squadrons; the ultimate objective is 2,000. The proportion of heavy bombers is not so large as in Germany; more emphasis has been laid on pursuit types.

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The Czechs could, then, put up a very strong *initial* resistance. But when all is said and done, a nation of 15,000,000 population cannot, however efficient its armament, resist for long the powerful thrust of a nation of five times that population, with corresponding resources. The Czechs will most certainly fight if invaded by Germany; they will most certainly be overwhelmed in the end unless some other power comes to their aid.

Both France and Russia have pledged themselves to aid Czechoslovakia if Germany moves. Geographical considerations seem to prevent Russian aid being immediately effective save by air, and even then the distances are great. Moreover, there is considerable doubt as to whether Russia's internal conditions would actually permit her to act offensively outside her own borders; and she must keep a wary eye on the Far East. There remains France.

The French army is the best in Europe. The French air force, though short of modern planes, is in tactical organization and training superior to the German. What could France do to help Czechoslovakia? She could exert immediate pressure on the German western frontier.

Could Germany resist this pressure until she had disposed of Czechoslovakia?

The defenses of Germany in the west are based on two fortified areas, one in the Saar region and one, watching the crossings of the Rhine, in the Schwarzwald. These defense areas are really a series of fortified villages, manned by reservists resident therein; they are connected by field fortifications, but there are several gaps. There are isolated fortresses at several strategic points. This system is apparently intended, as Hanson Baldwin points out in "The Caissons Roll," "to allow the French to enter Germany and there to destroy the invading armies in the narrow, all but impassable corridors formed by the fortifications." This is all very well, provided that there are sufficient field troops to do the destroying; as above noted, a fortification in itself is of no use save as it acts as a base for a field army, or save within the range of its artillery. But one is here to suppose a German army of 1,125,000 men disposing of sufficient forces to overwhelm the Czechs on the one hand, and to hold off a powerful French thrust with the other. Whatever the initial successes of the force attacking the Czechs, certainly that effort will—like all modern offensives—absorb more and more reserve forces as it proceeds; and all the while the French pressure will be growing. It seems highly doubtful whether the present German army could successfully accomplish both missions.

Moreover, Czechoslovakia is a member of the Little Entente, of which the other two members are Rumania and Jugoslavia. Rumania is probably out of the military picture for the moment, at least as an active force in the Danubian Basin. But Jugoslavia, with a powerful and well trained army, cannot be overjoyed at having so dangerous a neighbor as Nazi Germany substituted for Austria on her northern marches. No more can Italy. What the inner reactions of Il Duce to the ominous sight of German troops on the Brenner Pass may have been, we are not informed. But they cannot have been wholly untinged with suspicion and foreboding. A satisfactory agreement with Great Britain might effect a great alteration in his point of view.

And Britain herself?

As these words are written, the news has just come of Mr. Chamberlain's refusal to guarantee British support of Czechoslovakia against German invasion. As a diplomatic gesture, this may have its points; if translated into actual policy in face of a German offensive, it would be extremely shortsighted from the military viewpoint. For if the Bastion of Europe is overrun by Germany, there is no barrier that will stay the "Drang nach Osten" short of the Black Sea. Once Czechoslovakia has succumbed, the German outposts will stand at the mouths of the Danube and the Dniester just as certainly as the sun will rise in the heavens tomorrow morning. And this means not only a vastly more powerful Germany, a Germany possessed of reserves of foodstuffs and minerals and above all of that essential of modern warfare, petroleum: it also means a German fleet in the Black Sea; it means German pressure on Turkey and eventually on Iraq and Persia; it means German accomplishment of the final objective of the "Drang nach Osten" policy, the acquisition of the short-line to the Indian Ocean via Mosul and Bagdad to Basra; it means, in fine, the end of British dominance in the Near East and within a measurable period of time, in the Indian Ocean. It means therefore nothing less than the destruction of the British Empire: or its preservation at the price of a long, bloody war.

It is to be feared that the British Cabinet, as on certain occasions during the World War, is disregarding the opinions of its military advisers. One can but hope that the results will not be so disastrous as, for example, the failure at Gallipoli.

In any case it is clear that tremendous issues depend on the Bastion of Europe remaining inviolate. Neither France, nor Britain, nor Italy, nor Russia, nor any of the Balkan Powers can be indifferent to its fall—a fact in which lies the Czechoslovaks' brightest hope. Their bastion is strong, and will be gallantly defended; but their ultimate fate is in the hands of others. They hold something more than the Bastion of Europe; they hold the Bastion of Freedom, of everything that goes to make up what the free peoples of this earth call civilization. If that bastion falls, we are face to face with the remaking of the map of the world.

GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT

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Shoot the Works

A Cheer for the Melting Pot

ONE OF THE MOST HEARTENING THINGS that has happened in our international relations is the present move to find havens for political refugees and oppressed peoples. We are going back to one of the finest of American traditions. And it is a tradition from which we have strayed in recent years. It was not a small thing that America was known once throughout the world as the homeland of the homeless.

At the moment it would not be wise to discuss our entire policy toward the immigrant. In an age of crash and recession certain arguments might be presented against unlimited hospitality. But I can see no reason that could be advanced against a policy of shelter for the men and women and children who live under a terror.

Too much, I think, has been said about the debt which the immigrant, the alien if you please, owes to America. And too little has been said concerning our debt to the stranger within our gates.

And when that familiar cry, "Why don't you go back where you came from?" is raised, it seems to me that the person under pressure might well reply, "Yes, but let me state the stipulations. I will go back where I came from, but in all fairness I have a right to ask the privilege of taking with me the things which I have created. I will take the railroads which I and my fellow foreigners have set down across your prairies. And I will take the ditches which we have dug and the towers reared against the skies. Even more than that, if I depart you must permit me to retain within my baggage the hopes and aspirations and the ideals which I took with me when I came to you from across the seas. It was said that here was the melting pot and in this crucible men and women of many countries have poured not only their sinews but their souls. If I go back in company with my fellows, give us that flesh and blood which we dared to risk in the great experiment."

And whoever says this will be quite correct, because if America goes completely Aryan and nationalistic it will betray the bright dream of the founding fathers. Most of the tough and dirty work which has made us a great and wealthy nation has been performed by aliens. Even beyond the taking of naturalization papers they became part of this continent through the foot-pound energy of their arms and shoulders. A compact that is signed in blood and sweat should be, in all logic, more binding than a signature by pen and ink.

The Pilgrim fathers, and they, too, were immigrants and aliens, may have cut a thin bite into the wooded shores of New England, but the wilderness and the desert were conquered by Italians, Irish, Slovaks and that vast undefined group known in our colloquial speech as "hunkies."

The hunky is probably the most typical American of all. We are, for what it's worth, a land made up economically and culturally of contributions. The hundred-percent American is an Indian in a blanket. And at the moment he does not seem to be a person of much consequence. There is an American culture. We should be proud of it. There is no reason why we should be ashamed to face the English critics or the visiting lecturers. Here novels have been created and short stories and music; and paint has been set down on canvas in a way to be remembered. But no single race or national strain can legitimately claim all the credit. This has been a synthesis of far-flung cultures. I think it is good. It seems to me that America has made its mark and that "x" may forever mark the spot of one of the greatest experiments in human brotherhood. And so we would be both vain and cruel if we departed from the old standard and made any declaration such as, "Nobody can join, nobody can help, nobody can hang around."

Of course the immediate problem is the establishment of a free land for the Jews of the world. We ought to know the contribution which they have made to our civilization. There would be a very meager amount of American music if it were not for the Jewish composers and the Jewish performers. Our theatre has been largely developed by our Jewish citizens. It will be said and has been said that the net result has been a vulgarization of the arts. But this can be maintained only by those who look most casually upon the enterprises concerned. In the first place there is no such thing as "the Jew."

There can be such a thing as a model-T in the field of automobiles, but men and women cannot be grouped under any single hood. Among Jews as well as among Pilgrims and Scandinavians there is a gap between the topmost flight and the bottom. But here increasingly, because of the drive of fascism, we identify by race the person whom we dislike. In a restaurant I have heard it said, "Look at that loud Jew over there in the corner." We seem to forget that there are also loud Lithuanians and graduates of Groton. In fact some of the most flamboyant public exhibitions of bad taste which I have ever seen have been put on by Harvard men. I say this with regret but, I think, with entire accuracy.

One of the criticisms raised against the immigrant within our gates is that he sends some of his money back to his homeland. From the point of view of the economic experts, such a complaint is silly. After all, the man who digs a ditch and gives some part of his hard-earned stipend to parents in Italy, Rumania or Russia is not in any true sense diminishing our national wealth. There is still such a thing as international trade, and if no money were ever sent abroad to Europe we should have no customers beyond the boundaries of our country. But above that, there is the certain truth that the laborer is worthy of his hire and that he produces more than he gains. Surely it is unfair to deny the underpaid and hard-pressed manual worker the right to do what he pleases with his paltry pay.

One of my favorite orations is a speech which B. Charney Vladeck has delivered several times. Mr. Vladeck was a revolutionist in Russia in the days of the Tsar and so, of course, he was sent to Siberia. And while he was in prison he got out of the library a copy of Charnwood's "Life of Lincoln," which had been translated into Russian. And as Vladeck read this story of the Great Emancipator he thought to himself, "When I am released from this cell I want to go to the land of Lincoln."

And finally he was free and he came to America. He came to the slums of New York City and he was both

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puzzled and shocked as he looked about him, for this was not the land of Lincoln. And later he got a job which sent him traveling through the Middle West. But he ran constantly into the fierce rivalry and cutthroat contact of our competitive economic system. And every city to which he came had slums not unlike those of New York. He despaired, but one night in Indianapolis he saw a poster announcing that Eugene Debs would speak. He went. Debs spoke. And as this American with a Hoosier twang preached his gospel of brotherhood, Vladeck suddenly sat up in his seat and said to himself, "I've made no mistake. This can be the land of Lincoln."

And let us make no mistake. We will and can make our country true to the ideals of the Emancipator, and that means we must resolve to leave the door ajar for all those who suffer under oppression. HEYWOOD BROUN

Washington Notes

Senor Cardenas and the Gringos

THE SEIZURE of United States and British oil properties in Mexico has presented the Roosevelt administration with an issue as prickly as a desert cactus. It will make or break the good-neighbor policy. The Mexican government is right in principle. The oil companies have exploited Mexico's resources in the classic manner of business imperialism. The war cry of the present Mexican regime, "Mexico for the Mexicans," has great moral justification.

Moreover, in President Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexico apparently has a leader of high idealism. It is true he has a brother whose pecuniary habits have been the scandal of United States residents in Mexico City, but Señor Cárdenas himself seems to be singularly free from suspicion. Persistent accusations have been made that he is a stooge for Señor Vicente Lombardo Toledano, the militant chief of the Mexican Workers' Federation, or CTM. These are, however, denied by official United States sources. Señor Cárdenas is head man, and to him belongs the credit for Mexico's social experiments for the last two years.

Since Mexico has a holy cause, and a worthy leader, the seizure of the oil properties should not present a problem to the Roosevelt administration. The State Department ought to tell the oil companies to abide by Mexican laws, and wish Señor Cárdenas good luck. According to officials, however, the case is not so simple as this.

The main trouble seems to be that the Cárdenas government is broke, or close to it. It is in debt to its central bank. For months foreigners have been shipping money out of the country. So have well-to-do and rich Mexicans. The center of political power in Mexico today, as in generations past, is with the Mexican generals. Not now, but in two or three months, observers here foresee that Señor Cárdenas will have trouble in paying the army.

An almost equally serious problem concerns the peons. Last season Mexico's crops partially failed. Señor Cárdenas' critics lay the failure to the breaking-up of private estates, and the establishment of government-controlled *ejidos*, particularly the great Laguna cotton venture. While the state farms were doubtless inefficient, so were the *haciendas* they replaced. The real trouble seems to have been severe drought. But even though Señor Cárdenas is blameless, he badly needs money for his land program.

The Roosevelt administration, in the last few days, has shown that it will not let itself be hustled by the oil companies into intervention. Apparently it means to withstand pressure even from the British government. Its chief concern seems to be not to do anything that would bring about the collapse of its good-neighbor program. Nevertheless, officials clearly have the fidgets. They are not sure where Señor Cárdenas' necessities will drive him.

One obvious place is into an economic arrangement with Japan, Italy or Germany. Mexico must sell oil abroad uninterruptedly, or else face enormous changes in her economy. Where can the Mexican workers sell the output of their newly acquired properties? All but 17 percent of the world's tankers are controlled by the same United States, British and Dutch companies that the Cárdenas government has just ejected from the country. There is not a dog's chance of Mexican oil's being sold in the principal world markets. Señor Cárdenas has repeatedly proclaimed his hatred of fascism. But, as a practical matter, how can he avoid turning to the fascist countries?

Many observers think that Señor Cárdenas will enter a deal with one or more of them within the next few weeks. Unquestionably the news that Mexican gasoline was being used to bomb either the Chinese or the Spanish Loyalists would cause a revulsion of popular feeling toward Señor Cárdenas in the United States. So would the news that he had entered into a secret agreement with Japan, Italy or Germany. The oil companies could be counted on to fan this feeling to the utmost.

Señor Cárdenas' alternative is to accept the loss of Mexico's exports of oil, and try to readjust his country's economy. This would entail general unemployment among the oil workers, together with a temporary lowering of the standard of living among well-to-do and rich Mexicans. Observers here fear it would precipitate a conservative revolt. As the lesson of Spain has shown, the side that could buy the best foreign airplanes would win. The credit of the Cárdenas government abroad is negligible, while a future Mexican Franco would have the undercover backing of the world oil cartel. Administration officials dread this outcome as much as that of a fascist alliance. A final solution would be Señor Cárdenas' surrender to the oil cartel. The administration does not relish this outcome either.

Last week, in these Notes, mention was made of the anxiety of the administration to make clear its disapprobation of Hitler's coup in Austria. The genius of Secretary Ickes seems to have found a way. After the horrible explosion of the "Hindenburg" last year at Lakehurst, Congress passed a law permitting the Germans to buy our helium gas. The Zeppelin company, constructing a successor to the "Hindenburg," accordingly made application for helium, at a reported price of three cents a cubic foot. About three months ago, a German ship, with steel containers for the gas, appeared in a Texas port. Meantime, the application had been approved by the State Department. All was in readiness except Mr. Ickes' counter-signature. Suddenly

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last week it was reported that Mr. Ickes found the application inadmissible. The law stipulates that foreign countries may not purchase helium in sufficient quantities to enable them to store it for war purposes. The Zeppelin company had asked for 19,000,000 cubic feet, and only 6,000,000 is required to inflate its new ship. Unofficially the Germans explained that each crossing of the Atlantic means a heavy leakage of gas, and that the excess 13,000,000 cubic feet is no more than enough for a single season. It is understood that Mr. Ickes remains doubtful. The indications are that his doubts will continue for a good while longer.

Washington T. R. B.

Other People's Money

A Bill to Dull the Appetite for War

THE CONGRESS is going to get an opportunity to show how serious it is about knocking the profits out of war. The Senate Finance Committee is apparently about to approve the plan now sponsored by Senator Tom Connally of Texas, to impose taxes on all profits in wartime on such a scale as to make great war profits impossible.

The genesis of this bill is important now. It grows out of the munitions investigation of the Senate. As that committee neared the end of its labors it decided that some plan should be contrived to make the repetition of war profits impossible. Accordingly it provided for a study of the subject and the writing of a bill. That job was entrusted by the committee to the writer. I assembled a group of economists, accountants and lawyers and proceeded to an examination not only of the data about profits in the last war but of the economic factors at the bottom of war profits generally. This study resulted in a bill which became known as the Nye anti-war-profits measure.

About the same time the House of Representatives became excited about a plan to take the profits out of war, and from that agitation arose a bill which was sponsored by the late Congressman McSwain of South Carolina, chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee. That plan was conceived and urged by Mr. Bernard Baruch, who had been head of the War Industries Board and had seen the war prosperity of 1917 in all its ugliness.

The difference between the two plans may be simply stated. Mr. Baruch believed that the way to prevent unreasonable war profits was to regulate prices—to put a ceiling over prices as of the day when war is declared and to supplement this with wide powers in the government to commandeer industries which prove recalcitrant and to establish priorities in favor of industries engaged in essential war production.

The plan which I submitted to the Senate Committee was based upon an entirely different approach. It recognized that war and war industry produce immediately certain economic phenomena. For one thing, there is at once a demand for certain materials and for labor to fabricate war products. We are instantly confronted with war industries competing with peacetime industries for materials and labor. This competition can become acute and destructive if at the same time an immense amount of fresh purchasing power is unloosed into the economic system. And this invariably happens in modern times, because governments insist on financing war with borrowed capital.

As soon as war is declared or is imminent the government begins to borrow vast sums of money through banking operations. The effect of this is to flood the business world with huge streams of new purchasing power. The money is spent in war industries. The workers in war industries take their wages over to the peacetime industries and buy, and presently the money which began in the war industries is over in the peacetime industries, creating purchasing power, stimulating immense activity and intensifying the demand for materials and labor. We have, in short, a genuine credit inflation created by war borrowing. When this inflation gets under way, it is impossible or nearly impossible to control it. It makes the war effort cost many times more than it should. It dislocates industry, as all inflation does. It makes food, clothing, everything skyrocket in price; it subjects the nation to a vast public debt and when the war is over it throws the economic system onto the mercy of a complete collapse.

To attempt to regulate prices while at the same time the government is hurling huge volumes of purchasing power into the hands of the people is like pouring immense floods into a weak dam and at the same time passing a law that the water must not rise higher than a certain point. If you finance the war with borrowed funds you will put tremendous gobs of purchasing power into the hands of the people. With those funds in their hands they will demand goods, they will compete for goods. The job of price regulation will become impossible.

The way to prevent this is to refuse to use the war as an occasion for inflation. Instead of paying for the war with borrowed funds, pay for it as we fight it. Pay for it out of taxes. We will take young men from their work benches, from their offices, from their college classrooms, from their professional careers and their homes and send them into the armies to fight the war. Is it improper to ask those who remain behind to pay for the war?

It is quite all right to permit the government to regulate prices. But this will be simple enough if the inflation is prevented. This is the principle of the Munitions Committee's bill. That bill was approved unanimously by the Munitions Committee, led by Senators Nye, Vandenberg, Clark, Bone, Pope, George and others. Later it was recommitted to the Military Affairs Committee, where it was again approved. Then because it was primarily a tax bill it was sent to the Finance Committee. Senator Harrison named a subcommittee to study it, headed by Senator Connally. Now Senator Connally's committee is about to report a bill in which the principle of war taxation is employed. He has changed the rates to make them less severe, but that is unimportant. The principle is retained. He has left out a number of other provisions about the conscription of industry. But that too is unimportant. The great thing is to establish now, before war starts, that the moment a war is declared there will go into effect a set of tax rates which will make it impossible for any man to prosper during the war. That will dull the appetites for war of a good many patriots. JOHN T. FLYNN

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Movies: The Fat with the Lean

"BLUEBEARD'S EIGHTH WIFE" suffers from trying so hard. Of course Ernst Lubitsch directed it and of course it has all sorts of apt comedy talent—Gary Cooper, Claudette Colbert, David Niven, Franklin Pangborn, Herman Bing, Edward Everett Horton. And when its situations are funny, which is often the case, it is very funny. But the Alfred Savoir plot was rancid from the start.

Gary Cooper, as the big financier with seven divorces behind him (a slight miscast in one eye here), falls in love with Claudette, and vice versa. Fine. It might happen to you. But though the last hope of a titled family practically on relief, Claudette has a mind of her own—proud as Lucifer, to coin a phrase worthy of the situation. So they get married, but little recks he. *She* is not going to be tossed aside like an old sock; his haughty whatsis must be broken. So a good part of the story turns around the two of them wildly in love and honeymooning all over Europe, and spring at that, and she won't let him touch her, absolutely no dice. Yes I know, but that is what it says. Months go by and fie sir not I sir she simply will not take off her things and stay a minute. Yes I know again, but according to the story he doesn't.

So finally to prove she is the kind of girl worth waiting for, she drives him into a nervous breakdown and divorce and he sees (here is another hot off the mint) the error of his ways. If they had come out with the story of the Indian squaw and the broken glass, or if the couple had been Grace Moore and Charlie McCarthy, we could at least have swallowed the yarn up to the point where he was taken off to the sanitarium, just a bundle of splinters and well out of it at that. But otherwise the whole idea is so (1) absurdly fake, or (2) inherently morbid, or (3) both, that laughter at antics becomes more uneasy, strained and flat as the thing runs on. In the end it is hard to remember laughing even when the comedy was most bright and clever.

"Merlusse," a contrast from France, is curiously successful in making a short story into about an hour of feature picture. There are many things Marcel Pagnol does not know about setting the pace of a film story, and in a way this quiet ignorance works in his favor. He has a sure touch for certain human and dramatic values, and the main test anyway is whether a man can bring the thing off, which he does. The story is a sort of Christmas-Carol affair, and if the obstacles to any kind of success aren't apparent at first, just imagine a standard program picture going into the subject of the gruff schoolmaster who finally betrays his sensitive love for children (Lionel Barrymore, Jane Withers and Our Gang), and try not to laugh.

In the drab atmosphere of a nearly deserted boarding school at Christmas, the film is immaculate. Surely there is nothing more desolate in the back of your memory than the bare scuffed corridors and boxed rooms, the fixed unfriendly lighting, desks and chairs, the air of a hostile and inscrutable discipline as heavy in the air as the mixed smells of ink and chalk dust and cedar pencil shavings, old books and paper, wet shoes and girls' hair—all that from the schoolroom after hours heightened by the contrast with the home festival of all but this handful of little misfits and toughies who either had no home for Christmas or weren't wanted at it. (The spirit of all this is beautifully underlined in the shot of the long dining hall, with the handful of them at supper deep at the end of that long hall of tables, the high shadows of the line of boys marching, etc.

The story element is in abeyance through most of the film. We merely see the kids and the routine of their Christmas Eve under the ogre with the glass eye, whom they call Merlusse, the old dried codfish. Exercise, study period, dinner and finally to their beds in the cold dormitory. The only real action, in fact, is the surprise twist of the kids getting up in the morning to find, in each of the shoes left under their beds, some toy or favor or prize of boyhood. It was old one-eye—someone peeked and caught him at it during the night. So while he is still out washing they get up their personal treasures and pile them on his bed, being touched as they should be, sensing the desperate bluff of his former defenses as well as we can from the action which follows. (The final bit ties up a thread running in the background of the story, of Old Merlusse's unpopularity and his possible failure of advancement.) Really a *tour de force* and turned quickly, it is still done with such delicate true sentiment, such a fireside warmth of what we forever hope to find in human nature and with steady disappointment, that it throws a glow back over the whole picture, giving it the total illusion of truth (and let who will be clever).

And Besides.—The New School for Social Research, taking advantage of the current interest in factual-fiction films from life, has embarked on an interesting if shaky experiment in presenting a course on the documentary film. Worst lecture so far: Terry Ramsaye, who was entertaining enough in a strange informal manner that combined the oracular sneer with a petulant down-at-the-heel nihilism. If there was anything good as art in the movies, that was "our" mistake, meaning the mistake of Mr. Ramsaye and other big movie men. As a matter of fact, Mr. Ramsaye has followed the industry since magic-lantern days but as an amanuensis rather than a magnate: he is still a follower and his feet hurt. His talk, illustrating the "documentary" content of fictional films, was as far off the track as the exhibit—which consisted of dramatic moments from such non-documents as the inevitable "Covered Wagon."

Best lecture so far: Jean Lenauer, who had Cavalcanti's "Rien que les Heures" (1923); Ruttmann's "Melody of the World" (about the first sound film in Europe); and Ivens' "New Earth" to talk about. Only a theatre exhibitor, and more at home in other languages than in English at that, Lenauer spoke with a quiet cogency that threw more light on comparative techniques and progress, gave more idea what creative filming might be about, and cluttered the mind with less high nonsense, than a majority of the people you can read or listen to. Ruttmann's sound effects came through as more imaginatively mature than we are now, ten years later, but the best film of the evening was "New Earth," even in a sad, chewed-up print. For the record be it said that there has been no projection and amplification equipment more shamefully inadequate than that of the New School since they used to run off Lyman Howe in the Ware, Mass., Town Hall.

OTIS FERGUSON

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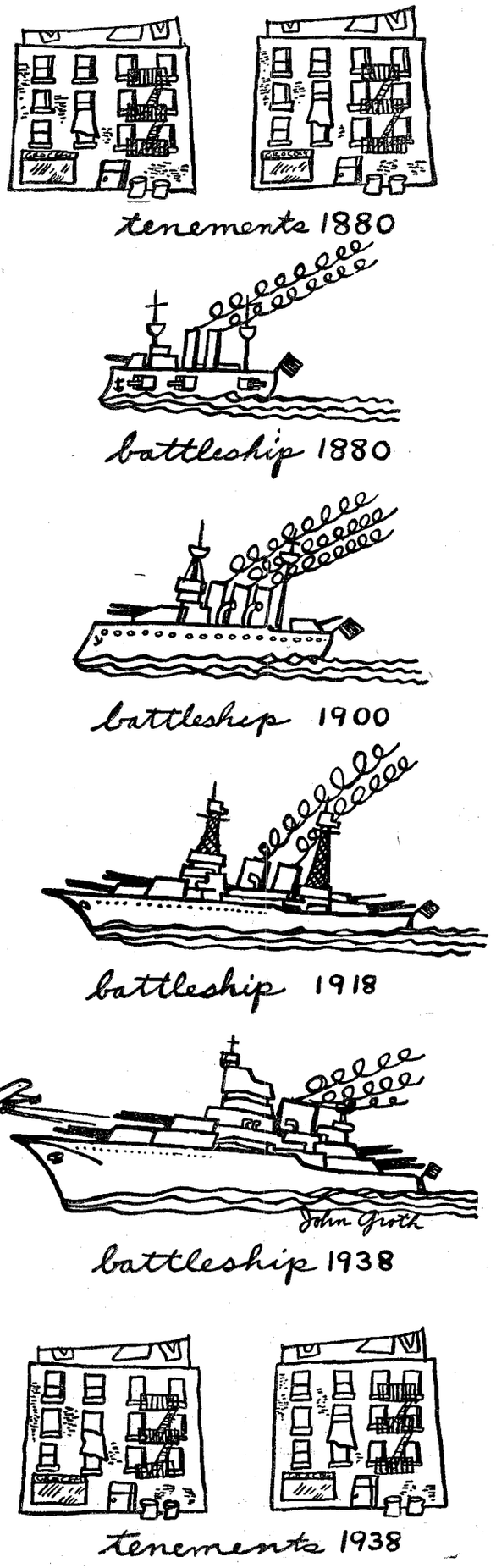
FIFTY-EIGHT YEARS OF PROGRESS

by Groth



The Bandwagon

You conquered Austria not with the bloody use of force but with your warm heart.—*Herman Göring, quoted in a Berlin dispatch to The Philadelphia Record.*

If the poor man elects to buy in small quantities instead of large, that's too bad.—*Judge George Gowen Parry of Philadelphia, quoted in The Philadelphia Record, at a hearing on the constitutionality of the sales tax.*

This war is bringing the world into a fellowship and a brotherhood that before seemed only a dream. The war begun by military despotism has brought us face to face with the federation of the world. The outcome is to be a sweeping away of autocracy in all its forms and the establishment of democracy and worldwide brotherhood, including to the full those nations at this moment fighting against us.

Two thousand years ago Jesus Christ gave to the world the message of the brotherhood of man. Today we stand face to face with its realization.—*Bishop William T. Manning, in a speech made about twenty years ago, quoted in The New York Globe.*

Swing Your Lady

Archbishop Rudolph A. Gerken called upon all Catholics today to refrain from attending this city's leading holiday society event, the "gold-rush ball" for the benefit of the Santa Fe Maternal Health Center. The church officials said the ball is "in reality a birth-control clinic."—*Dispatch from Santa Fe, N. M., published in The New York Herald Tribune.*

Moscow Art Theatre

I would like to take the opportunity of this parody on justice to suggest a hypothesis which I have reason to believe may be a possibility. That possibility is that not Christian Rakowsky nor any of his colleagues are giving testimony from the prisoners' bench, but OGPU secret agents disguised and made up as doubles to act the roles assigned them. I do not believe this staging difficult if one realizes Russians are born actors who have always had a genius for changing their appearance.—*Professor George Lakhowsky, writing on the Russian trials in Le Journal (Paris), reprinted in The New York Evening Journal.*

Slum Clearance in Spain

Mr. Sedgwick said that slums were excellent breeding ground [sic] for Communist movements, and that General Franco had eliminated the slums in all territories captured by his armies.—*From an interview with Ellery Sedgwick, editor of The Atlantic Monthly, published in The New York Times.*

Barcelona Raided Eight Times, Thirty-nine Killed.—*Headline from the same issue of the same paper.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic.—THE EDITORS

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Correspondence

The Black Legion Comes Back

SIR: Recent European events have been engrossing the attention of the United States. In the East, particularly, all eyes look across the ocean. Yet ominous clouds are arising in our own Midwest. The industrial communities are again alive with reaction. The Black Legion rises once more in Detroit and in many of the other chief industrial communities. A recent count made by the Civil Rights Federation, an agency representing 325 farm, church and labor organizations in Michigan, showed the alarming existence of more than 50 organizations based upon racial prejudice and Red-baiting. The Black Legion is manifesting itself in new forms. Virgil Effinger, leader of the Black Legion, who is out on bail, is the self-admitted head of the latest variant of the Black Legion—the Patriots of America. The Sons of the South, another new organization based upon the heavy Southern population living in the Northern industrial communities, meets regularly. Along with other organizations of its type, it maintains close connections with the personnel departments of the large plants.

The Middle West sees this new movement as dating from the time that Tom Girdler began his use of violence and encouraged reactionaries to begin operating. There has been, and continues to be, a rise in anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic feeling in the Middle West, the natural outgrowth of the fanning of religious prejudice. The Anglo-Saxon Federation, which still publishes the Protocols of Zion with the original foreword by Henry Ford but with no mention of retraction and apology, has William J. Cameron, of Henry Ford's organization, as its director of publications. Contributory to the wave of reactionary sentiment following on these vigilante types of organizations is a tremendous influx of revivalist ministers. The Middle West has always had a large share of these, but now they are equipped with big temples, sound cars and radio broadcasting, and exert hitherto unknown pressure on industrial communities. The Middle West, too, hears again from Father Coughlin and in a measure his influence is rising.

These are but highlights of the conditions that have arisen to plague democratic processes. Observers in the Middle West are convinced that should these movements continue to grow, American democracy will be jeopardized even more than through foreign influence, although foreign events certainly contribute to their existence.

Detroit, Mich. AVRAHM MEZERIK

Hindus, Lyons and the USSR

SIR: The momentous questions of Mr. Hindus' native village and his exclusion from the famine area in 1933 have been thrashed out in The Saturday Review. Whether Mr. Hindus visited more farms and homes than I is a problem in accountancy; not length of sojourn but depth of understanding is at issue. Most of the correspondents he mentioned, and a lot of others, have written me in warm appreciation of my book. And comparing me with Herr Goebbels is just a piece of bilious temper. Cutting through Mr. Hindus' passionate puerilities, therefore, let's touch on essentials.

Despite the title, my book leaves no doubt that I expected no Utopia; unless it was "Utopian" to expect elementary human rights, and a trend toward instead of away from socialism. The most Mr. Hindus, like Mr. Josephson before him, can prove by his argument is that "Assignment in Utopia" may be an inept title.

All the subjects Mr. Hindus lists as having been omitted have, as a matter of fact, been discussed. I merely differ with the Hinduses in my estimate of the facts themselves and of their significance in relation to the whole Soviet picture.

He stresses greater literacy, for instance; I stress censorships, cultural reaction, outlawry of free thought that turn the new literacy into a cruel joke. He emphasizes children's homes; I am disturbed by liquidations, man-made famine and Yagoda terrors that make hordes of children homeless. Mr. Hindus does handsprings about the great creative forces—I am appalled by the monstrous destructive forces that pervert and nullify every creative urge.

Presumably I would have met his central objection if I had pointed out more forcefully that the peasants are taught to spell out their names before being liquidated, starved to death, or driven into foul concentration camps; that women are "liberated" before being turned into serfs of an exploiting state capitalism along with their menfolk.

The Italian newsreels, too, are filled with scenes of peasants learning to read, Prince Umberto opening new maternity homes, Il Duce inspecting new hydro-electric stations. All totalitarian states shout about unleashed creative forces, to drown out the moans of suffering millions.

Mr. Hindus' quarrel with me comes down to the differing values we attach to the complex Russian events. The whole point of my story is that for one man—myself—the cumulative horrors blotted out things that to others seem crucially important. Wherefore, while Mr. Hindus goes about airily discounting and prettifying those horrors, I feel moved to expose them.

Every dispatch out of Russia, I am sorry to say, gives tragic corroboration to my view that "movements for economic change are worthless, even dangerous, as soon as they throw off respect for life, for liberty, for justice. . . ." I still believe that these things are more important than bread; even if all Russians ultimately do have enough bread. I still believe that maternity homes and learning to write, and even speeded-up industrialization, do not justify or outweigh despotism, millions of political prisoners, wholesale murder of political critics, the pollution of young minds by glorification of Yagoda's GPU, destruction of trade unionism, cultural totalitarianism, etc., etc.

Omissions? The Hinduses, curiously, have omitted to raise their voice against the farcical trials and the slaughter of nearly all the makers of the revolution. A list of omissions in Mr. Hindus' books would require some 650 pages and would amount substantially to "Assignment in Utopia."

New York City EUGENE LYONS

SIR: Mr. Lyons has correctly stated the two issues between us. The first involves the reporting of facts about Russia. Neither Mr. Lyons' book nor his letter indicates any real knowledge of Russian agriculture, one of the chief points on which he took issue with me. Who visited more homes and farms is not a mere matter of accountancy; it is the very basis of understanding. Mr. Lyons describes five journeys he made in the Soviet Union. Three of these were official junkets arranged by the Foreign Office. I never joined these junkets. I chose instead, as Mr. Lyons says, to "wallow" in village mud, the only way one can know the Russian village.

I have accused Mr. Lyons of never spending a night on a

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collective farm, yet presuming to speak of collectivization as sharecropping. I said he never visited a college dormitory and never took the trouble to understand the advanced Russian youth. Mr. Lyons has evaded these charges; they must therefore stand. Consider further his opinion of the Russian masses. Once, he tells us, he went on a search for the "real Russia." What he found was disappointing, "the kind of people who, if put into a proletarian novel, would bar it from publication." Such snobbism automatically prevented Mr. Lyons from understanding the Russian masses and the Revolution.

The second issue, as Mr. Lyons says, is the differing values we attach to the complex Russian events. Here again he seems incapable of accurate reporting. I have never "airily discounted and prettified" Soviet horrors or defended excesses at any stage of Soviet development. On the contrary, I have always publicly deplored them. After all, the title of my book on Russia is not "Assignment in Utopia," but "Humanity Uprooted."

The fact that there may be injustice is more important to Mr. Lyons than "even if all the Russians do ultimately have enough bread." A mere trifle like that is not worth talking about! During the nineteenth century alone Russia had nineteen famines; what if for the first time in history the Russian people *do* solve the problem of scarcity? This is Mr. Lyons' "depth of understanding." On that basis, Oliver Cromwell would be nothing more than a cutthroat and Danton only a murderer.

It is not my fault that in his bitter disregard of the creative forces of the Revolution Mr. Lyons lays himself open to comparison with Joseph Goebbels, nor that in his contemptuous reference to the Russian masses he invites comparison with Hitler's statements on that subject in "Mein Kampf." Incidentally, Mr. Lyons speaks of foreign correspondents as "prostitutes"; Hitler speaks of them as "international criminals."

New York City MAURICE HINDUS

Not "Adequate"

SIR: From The New Republic's National Defense supplement [March 30] readers would be likely to get the impression that the American Institute for Public Opinion polled United States voters on the question: "Should we have an army and navy adequate for our defense?"

But, for the record, let me say that the American Institute of Public Opinion has never used this phraseology. On January 12 the Institute did report the question: "Should the United States build a larger navy?" Seventy-four percent said "yes." Again, on March 13, the Institute reported the question: "Do you think a larger navy, as now proposed by President Roosevelt, will be more likely to get us into war or keep us out of war?" Seventy-three percent thought the larger navy would "keep us out."

JOHN TIBBY,

New York City American Institute of Public Opinion

About Father Noel

SIR: It was a pleasure to read Mr. Wade's review of Conrad Noel's "Life of Jesus" in The New Republic for March 16. Since 1933 I have been interested to read, in several British publications, Father Noel's articles, and I should like to say as one of his co-religionists that his opposition to capitalism appears to me to be equaled by his opposition to "Papalism." I think Mr. Wade has misunderstood his attitude when he speaks of his "leanings toward Rome." The apparent willingness of the Church of Rome to compromise with fascism has been criticized by Father Noel freely and vehemently.

(Sister) RACHEL, O.S.A.

Versailles, Ky.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Alfred C. Hasterlo, care of YMCA, Columbus, Nebraska, would like to correspond with other readers of The New Republic in that area. . . . S. G. Northfield of Arka, North Dakota, wants to be supplied with a "good definition of communism." . . . N. R. Griffin of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, objects to the statement in J. G. Crowther's review of "A Philosophy for a Modern Man," by H. Levy (March 16), that a phenomenon which cannot be examined in isolation is not a subject of science. "The fact of the matter is," writes Mr. Griffin, "that science can tackle anything."

Michael Woolf of Brooklyn objects to the tone of the editorial, "Hitler's Worst Blunder" (March 25). ". . . the total effect is that of stirring the reader to awake and render assistance to Hitler in no uncertain terms. . . . Are you finally donning the uniform? Do I smell gunpowder in your presence?" . . . Sterling D. Spero of New York City writes that Heywood Broun ought to substantiate his remark, in "Trotskyism at Home and Abroad" (March 23) that here in America he sees a growing tendency for Lovestoneites and Trotskyites to make common cause with Girdlers and Sokolskys. . . . Herbert Solow of New York City writes on the same subject. He asks T.R.B. to name the Trotskyites involved in the attempts to have Mr. Harry Bridges deported (February 23), and Heywood Broun to name the persons against whom he makes charges. James P. Cannon, national secretary of the Socialist Workers' Party, New York City, makes the same demand of T.R.B., and says our failure to publish these names shows we are "contemptible," "rotten," "cowardly" and "Stalinist."

David Geppert of Wilmette, Illinois, replies to William Chancellor's letter (in this column, March 16) justifying war as a means of gratifying the human desire to quarrel. "The trouble with war is that it won't always stop when one is fully gratified."

Dr. Robert V. Sager, New York City, writes to express his disapproval of Edmund Wilson's translation of Pushkin's "The Bronze Horseman," published in our issue of January 26. He thinks that "Wilson's main contribution was an attempt to smear Stalin with Pushkin's hate for the Tsarist dynasty—ridiculous, strained and thoroughly unrealistic."

What's on the Air?

Representative Henry Teigan of Minnesota presents "The Farmer-Labor Viewpoint of the Present Session of Congress," Saturday, April 2, 10:45 P.M., CBS.

Representative Wright Patman of Texas speaks on "Local v. Absentee Ownership of Business," Monday, April 4, 7:45 P.M., NBC.-Red Network.

Dr. Thomas Parran talks on "Turning Back the Threat of Tuberculosis," Tuesday, April 5, 10:45 P.M., CBS.

Herbert Morrison, M.P., discusses "British Labor and the European Crisis," Wednesday, April 6, 7:15 P.M., CBS.

Secretary of State Cordell Hull speaks on the occasion of Pan American Day, Thursday, April 7, 10:30 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

Musical programs of the week include the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Saturday, April 2, 9:30 P.M., Mutual; the NBC Symphony Orchestra, Saturday, April 2, 10 P.M., NBC-Red Network; Mischa Levitzki, soloist with the Philharmonic-Symphony Society, Sunday, April 3, 3 P.M., CBS; the Philadelphia Orchestra, Monday, April 4, 9 P.M., NBC-Blue Network; and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Wednesday, April 6, 2:45 P.M., Mutual.

All times given are Eastern Standard Time.

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Books in Review

In the Tradition from Emerson

BY ADAPTING FOR HIS TITLE Flaubert's remark, "And what is an artist if he is not a triple thinker," Wilson has indicated his angle of preoccupation in these ten essays[1] which range in time from Pushkin to Bernard Shaw. For the most part he takes for granted the craftsmanship of the writers he is considering, and focuses the sharp lens of his attention on the configuration of their ideas. He brings to them fresh awareness and the rare kind of curiosity which not only probes but also holds on doggedly through long analysis, and leaves the reader with an absorbed interest in the subject and with a challenge to return to the text for himself. This book lacks the final impact of "Axel's Castle," since it is not built around a central theme, but it is held together by the tone of its thought.

Wilson has traveled long distances since he wrote his concluding passage on symbolist literature seven years ago. At that time he felt that with Proust and Joyce we had completed a cycle, or had reached an end, that they had given full expression to an epoch of decay in which the individual was isolated from fruitful coöperation with society, and that what lay before us through a closer understanding of economic realities was, in the last words of that book, "the hope and exaltation of the untried, unsuspected possibilities of human thought and art." From that time Wilson has been deeply concerned with Marxist theory and history, he has studied the depression in America, and has spent a winter in Russia. And the dominating accents in which he now writes do not voice hope, but are those of a disturbed and disillusioned radical. He concludes, while considering Pushkin, that "between the power that builds the State and the Idol that represents it, on the one hand, and the ordinary man, on the other, the distance is still very great." Such a conclusion, when underscored by the remark that no government, whether Tsarist or capitalist or socialist, will wholly eliminate the kind of conflict between the individual and the corporate interest which Pushkin embodies in "The Bronze Horseman," will doubtless get Wilson into trouble with the factionalist reviewers.

It may be useful, therefore, to relate his strain of thought to the sources from which it emerges, by examining, not one of his more controversial pieces, but the most fully rounded essay in this collection, that on John Jay Chapman. For that essay not only serves to place Wilson against his intellectual background, but is also, in its dense interweaving of quotation and comment, an example of his critical method at its best. Chapman was always aware that the seminal force behind him was Emerson, but Wilson defines the aims of the author of "Practical Agitation" with a sharper accuracy when he observes that Chapman's role "was to take the Thoreauvian intransigence into society instead of into solitude." What makes Chapman most satisfactory to Wilson is the way he wrote from the center of his own instincts; this wholeness of being bulks largest in causing Wilson's declaration that we have in Chapman "much our best writer on literature of his generation." Wilson goes one step farther in describing this quality: "as a moralist, he is a highly successful artist; and it is as a moralist that he now chiefly figures."

Wilson cites many passages from Chapman's letters and essays that show the truculent integrity of his protest against the commercial standardization of his day; it would be harder to demonstrate his accomplishment as an artist if one demanded also wholeness of design and execution. For Chapman's essays on literature, such as those on Shakespeare and Dante, are a series of impressionistic fragments, mainly concerned with voicing Chapman's emotion and hardly wrestling centrally with the works under concern. Wilson could have had a subject which would have thrown into high relief Chapman's strength as well as his limitations, if he had developed a similar study of Paul Elmer More's work instead of being content with a deft recording of the aloof pale coolness of More's personality as he encountered it on a Princeton week-end.

Chapman unquestionably possessed by far the richer temperament, and his declaration that "all life is nothing but passion" links him with Whitman even more than with Emerson. But Irving Babbitt's hard and dour mind, with a more formidable vigor than More's but with the same aims, perceived the vagueness of the Emersonian strain, insisted on more severe obligations to society, and confronted moral issues with a centralized grasp that makes much of Chapman's intransigence seem merely willful. This is not to deny the drastic narrowness of Babbitt's social sympathies in contrast to Chapman's generosity, but is intended simply to suggest some of the questions that must be raised when you discuss the work of a moralist. Wilson's lack of consideration of such a book, say, as More's "The Skeptical Approach to Religion," allows him to take with undue respect Chapman's late plunge into religiosity. The paragraphs which he selects to prove that Chapman's "Notes on Religion" "seem genuine and impressive in a way that most other recent religious writings do not" are lacking both in More's spiritual insight and discipline, to say nothing of Eliot's, and sound like a blurred reëchoing of the expansive mood of "The Oversoul." Wilson, to be sure, recognizes that "it is Emersonianism again"; also, that "it is intensely Protestant." That last phrase seems to reveal why Wilson, who, as he says, is "fundamentally unsympathetic with all modern manifestations of religion," still feels an authentic note here. The protesting strain is strongest in him as well as in Chapman.

Only against such a background, I believe, can Wilson's concluding essay, "Marxism and Literature," be properly understood. He sets himself to take forthright stock of what has been gained by our critics' recent absorption with Marxist theory, but his extreme reaction against Stalinism now causes him to dismiss many of the claims of historical materialism, indeed even to question whether for the critic of

[1] The Triple Thinkers: Ten Essays on Literature, by Edmund Wilson. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 295 pages. $2.75.

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literature Marxist texts are much more valuable than ordinary common sense. He has returned from his study of dialectic method with the renewed conviction that a work of art "should be judged in the first place by its own law"; and his latest reviews of Marxist works have increasingly stressed the necessity of personal honesty, courage and integrity. He may seem to have moved in a circle to have arrived back at such individualistic virtues, but they are the strongest element in the tradition he has inherited from Emerson and Chapman.

They serve him best when he is attempting to isolate and describe Flaubert's politics or the wavering confusions of Shaw; less well when he is discussing "The Ambiguity of Henry James," since such a subject demands not merely analysis of content, but the closest scrutiny of the technique by which James deliberately set out to create uncertainty between choices in the mind of his reader. The only essay that seems thinly grounded in special pleading is the one that considers verse as a dying art, but as it would take another whole review to argue the case, I can only indicate its danger spots in the taste that can regard with equal seriousness the talents of Hopkins and Edna Millay, or the dramatic verse of Maxwell Anderson and Eliot. A final weakness emerges on the last page of the volume, when, after enumerating the shortcomings he finds in the application of Marxism to literature, he concludes that nevertheless "we must not be unaware of the first efforts of the human spirit to transcend literature itself." That sentence will become increasingly meaningless to anyone who believes that the critic's primary task is to discern the object as it is, to devote the full measure of his skill to understanding and evaluating the work of art in front of him before he begins to conjecture about the next work that is likely to appear. But Wilson's sentence is highly Emersonian. And the best praise that can be given him is that a remark which William James made about Chapman can be applied to Wilson more fully than to anyone else now writing criticism in this country: "He just looks at things and tells the truth about them—a strange thing even to *try* to do, and he doesn't always succeed."

F. O. MATTHIESSEN

Long Black Song

Uncle Tom's Children, by Richard Wright. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

STORY MAGAZINE offered $500 for the best book-length manuscript submitted by anyone connected with the Federal Writers' Project. The prize was awarded to Richard Wright, a young, serious, quiet-spoken Negro born in Natchez and haphazardly educated in Chicago. His book, published last week, consists of four long stories that the publishers insist on calling novellas. I found them both heartening, as evidence of a vigorous new talent, and terrifying as the expression of a racial hatred that has never ceased to grow and gets no chance to die.

The first story, "Big Boy Leaves Home," is my favorite. Four Negro boys play hookey from school and go swimming beside a no-trespass sign. When they come out to get their clothes, a white woman thinks they are trying to molest her. Her husband shoots two of the boys, a third is lynched for killing him, and only the fourth escapes on a northbound truck. The beginning of the story had been all horseplay and high spirits, yet even the jokes had revealed a consciousness of the never ending war between the races. " 'See tha sign over yonder?'—'Yeah.'—'Whut it say?'—'NO TRESPASSIN,' read Lester.—'Know whut tha mean?'—'Mean ain no dogs n niggers erlowed,' said Buck." That sets the tone for the tragedy that follows.

"Down by the Riverside," the second story, is a Mississippi nightmare of rising water. A Negro sets out with his sick wife in a stolen rowboat, but finds on reaching the hospital that she has died along the way. There is no time to rest or mourn. Everybody gives him orders—sending him now to the broken levee with sandbags, now to the roof with an axe, now downstream to rescue the wife of a white man he has killed in self-defense—while the water swirls higher and the poor Negro's only choice is between death by drowning and death by lynching. . . . The third story, "Long Black Song," is about a Negro woman seduced by a white salesman. I liked it less than the others, chiefly because Wright seems florid and bombastic when dealing with sex. It is only at the end of the story that he returns to his general theme of interracial hatred and recovers his usual power and simplicity.

These first three stories have dealt with essentially the same plot: a Negro is goaded beyond endurance, a white man is killed, a Negro is lynched. All three of them are headlong narratives, written without technical devices (except for a skillful use of Negro songs) and without psychological subtlety, but carried ahead by the rush of events and by a single fierce emotion that the author shares with his characters. It is best expressed by Silas, the wronged husband in "Long Black Song." "The white folks ain never gimme a chance! They ain never give no black man a chance! There ain nothin in yo whole life yuh kin keep from me! . . . Ahm gonna be hard like they is! So hep me Gawd, Ahm gonna be *hard!* When they come fer me Ahm gonna *be* here!" An hour later Silas dies in his burning cabin, after killing two of the white besiegers.

A fourth story, "Fire and Cloud," tries to show that a different ending is possible. In a small Southern city, there are plans for a big relief demonstration. Dan Taylor, a black preacher with a starving flock, refuses to join it, but he won't forbid it either, and therefore he is taken into the woods and whipped by white men acting for the chamber of commerce. The whipping makes him a rebel. He marches to the city hall with thousands of hungry people, black and white together, and the police don't shoot or club them and at last they are given food. "Black and white, unite and fight." It is the old Communist slogan that Wright is presenting in terms of action, and it is a good slogan too, even for those like myself who are more attached than the Communists to things as they are. If the black and white sharecroppers and miners and steel workers could make a defensive alliance, then the race conflict would be at least partially transformed into a class conflict. That would still be a dangerous situation, but at least our society has developed peaceful methods for dealing with class conflicts. For dealing with race conflicts, the common method is violence—and except in this one story, Wright makes us feel that the violence in the South will never end.

MALCOLM COWLEY

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Fashion Is a Business

Fashion Is Spinach, by Elizabeth Hawes. New York: Random House. 346 pages. $2.75.

FOR YEARS people have been wanting to hear the inside story of the mysterious fashion business. Elizabeth Hawes, in "Fashion Is Spinach," gives us the kitchen side of it—and the cuisine side too, for she deals with both America and France. Those chapters in which she dishes the dirt impersonally are informative, humorous and well intentioned. But the book is embroidered and embellished with her own success story—that of the lone American couturière who, single-handed, has not only punctured the French legend that "all beautiful clothes are made in the houses of the French couturiers and all women want them," but has attacked the whole American mass-production fashion machine as well. She has even made an attempt to revolutionize modern man's uncomfortable and ungainly uniform. There is a lot in the book about her courage and success—too much for those who distrust press-agentry.

When Miss Hawes talks about the French legend—how it leads manufacturers up back alleys and into needless competition and betrays them into the hands of that "deformed thief and parasite," Fashion—her criticisms are better than her remedies. "Why not," Miss Hawes suggests to some brain trust, "make all those manufacturers get real designers? Wouldn't that be a handy way of cutting out all those marginal businesses? What if the brain trust continued to work and tore down all Fashion's slogans?" But the so-called "rag business," America's second largest industry, will not be changed by mere ultimatums from "some brain trust." Neither will it be altered by the "American woman settling comfortably back in an old black sweater and skirt and idly remarking to 90 percent of what she sees: 'Fashion Is Spinach and I Say to Hell with It.'" The public's long pull to get its money's worth in the way of pleasing and durable and un-hopped-up merchandise will involve a fight to abolish child labor and the sweatshop, and a fight for a system of education that will give a fair chance to those with potential talents for designing. It will also, on the public's part, involve the slight matter of earning enough money to "laugh off" those little $3.75 numbers that keep the sweatshops busy and make it possible for the wives of garment manufacturers to have their clothes made to order by Hattie Carnegie or Elizabeth Hawes.

Fashion mass production is our child. He's turned out to be a thief, a parasite, a liar, a whiner—everything that is odious to our sensibilities. But he's our child and we can't just retire to our ivory tower and throw him into the garbage can. He has to be fed and he has to be educated. . . . Perhaps one day when the merchant has shed his fundamental belief that the racks in the other fellow's store are greener, and when store executives have some concept of the meaning of beautiful and functional clothes—when retailers modify their idea of hiring buyers who are "geniuses at figures" and "meat-axes with merchandise"—then, perhaps, many of the beautiful clothes that *are* made on Seventh Avenue and en irons will see the light of day in more than a handful of department stores. Then, perhaps, retailers and manufacturers will be able to stop "chasing their own tails, done up neatly and gasping for breath in Fashion's bright cellophane."

MURIEL MAURER

The Search for Shakespeare

I, William Shakespeare, Do Appoint Thomas Russell, Esquire, by Leslie Hotson. New York: The Oxford University Press. 296 pages. $3.
Shakespeare Rediscovered, by Clara Longworth de Chambrun. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 335 pages. $3.

MR. LESLIE HOTSON is the scholar who has sleuthed through practically every tradesman's bill, criminal and civil record, inscription and scrap of document preserved from the breadth of England through Shakespeare's time, and has added many facts to one of the world's most mysterious biographies. This time his main service is in finding the Thomas Russell named as executor of Shakespeare's will and in tracing his career through a maze of connections with the landholdings, people and events of the day, digging up many who might logically have moved within the poet's London and Stratford circles. The most startling of these connections are those with some of the leading figures in the Gunpowder Plot—probably the most gruesome national scare of that full and explosive time. The remoteness of the day and the pastoral quiet of folios in a library always must fool us a little into forgetting that the fear of death and hope of gain were just as loud, noisome

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and universally busy then as now, with no man escaping; that England under Elizabeth and James I was very fine with its flowering prose, ships off to the unknown and men to the wars, pots tossing at the Mermaid, softly flows the Avon, God's wounds, Sirrah, etc. But England then was a country under the terror and the purge. There were the great lords picturesquely armed in the streets, but there were also the sinister pulling of wires, the devious little pimps' plots to turn an ounce of malicious gossip into a Star Chamber matter and a pound of gold, the terrible zeal of religious warfare turned to account to scandalize a writer's name or consolidate holdings or get on at court —all the way down the social line, with legal bickerings and slander and scuttling for pennies.

But Mr. Hotson is hardly concerned with this main picture, even with the main outline of his subject. He has dug up new leads of evidence, by the roots, and he brings them in just that way. For all his immense, methodical and indeed deadening research, the case he makes is largely circumstantial: "What is more likely to suppose than that," "It can only have been in keeping that"—if, in short, this and that and those *were* the case, then the outcome could only have been such and such. Ingenious and likely, but there is still your if. Without more selective skill in presentation (Mr. Hotson writes like a translation into classical Latin of an editorial from The Herald Tribune), and without a candid appreciation of what the man Shakespeare might and must have been against his own background, such works amount to little more than a scholar's exercise. They are invaluable as evidence; like evidence they are repetitive and often inconsequential, their few pertinent facts buried in more useless information than you ever thought existed. (And I mean the Useless Dressed Up, the rococo allusion and quote, fancy in flight like a 1917 Martin bomber: "It must have been a pleasure for Sir Dudley thus to connect his new house with the Romans whom his father had so deeply admired," signifying and apropos of nothing.)

Clara de Chambrun is an enthusiast and a sort of amateur scholar (she had to take a degree before anyone would listen to her findings, which have been various and often valuable). What she has to say about Shakespeare's life is more like it, though still far enough away from the work of the man who will some day correlate all useful discoveries, study sixteenth-century England, read the plays as though they were just out for review and write the Shakespeare book that will close the subject as far as we need be concerned. Her main point is that Shakespeare traveled in Catholic circles in dangerous times, and her pertinent readings and discoveries are such that we can't complain if she rides it a little hard. (Her most exciting finding is of what appears to be Shakespeare's own marked copy of Holinshed.)

Her main evidence makes Shakespeare the protégé of Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, thus getting him on the thin ice of recusancy. What she has to say of the moral preconceptions and subtle jingo of the later English scholars, their refusal of evidence pointing to Shakespeare as a man or as a papist, is worth listening to. But it seems fairly clear that Elizabeth's purge of those clinging to what still seemed the Established Religion, gaining in terror and effectiveness as her power was consolidated, would make the Russian purges look fairly ordinary. The country was

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a hotbed of intrigue, both of priests and underground sympathizers (one reason the Puritans hated the theatre so desperately was its reputation as a rallying ground for Catholics), and of search squads, envious gossips, paid informers. The "Justice Shallow" case Leslie Hotson made out some years ago fits perfectly into this picture, in fact, though he never developed its implications. Thousands were arrested and tortured, hundreds put to death; it was as much as your life was worth to own a Douay Bible; the "press" was severely muzzled; and as always, matters of personal opinion, even of too much learning, were twisted into Treason against the State.

Southampton himself was thrown into the Tower, and when "Richard II" was reënacted suspiciously close to the Essex rising, Shakespeare's company was in hot water, and Clara de Chambrun brings up suggestive evidence that they all went to Scotland until it blew over. However, Shakespeare had friends and a serene manner of playing his cards close, and if he was a Catholic or mere sympathizer, he was too foxy to give it away. The internal evidence is lacking, and the point of less importance than this picture of the hazardous time he worked in.

So what about Shakespeare? Anyone who can read with his ears open can give even a sensible researcher like Mr. Hotson cards and spades that the man behind the plays tumbled an extra farmer's wench or so in his time, without a documented haystack at all. There is a swing to the way a man talks and a pattern in the things he cherishes that mock scansion and Internal Evidence. And what about this man of Catholic family, lively tastes, anger and humor and urbane wisdom, who could live fairly conspicuously in those times and leave so little trace? We have voluminous testimony from almost any small literary or political errand boy among his contemporaries—are we to suppose that the Shakespeare dossier is empty altogether through chance? I have an idea that a very good measure of the fellow lies in the way he did *not* leave around those loose ends that are the scholar's delight, that he did *not* ease his ego by covering the forest with posters, or writing long literary letters, or spilling out personal conquests and frustrations at every turn in the line (this perhaps barring the sonnets, which are still obscurely personal despite the very reasonable explanation of the Chambrun-Southampton theory). His world of creation was so immense and he so drunk in it that I doubt Shakespeare gave a hoot for Expressing Himself, his Purpose, his Philosophy of Life, and all that serious-sterile manifestation of pomposity and author's jitters. The color and form of all things, the life of people—these so delighted him to enter into and play *through*, that outside of an occasional canard, a hoot, a wreath of sentiment he never felt, the world of the plays never shows (and can never be proved to show) any need for beating the drum. Of course he pulled his punches—he was quite shameless about throwing in a dozen murders, a bit of buffoon vaudeville, a love passage of frightful euphuism—and if the flag would save the act he'd wave the flag. But creation was the thing; he cannot be tagged because his appetites and understanding were universal. He was so cagey and discreet in a world full of pamphlets, parties, manifestoes, it is in a way shocking to find that he is still being read, let alone the great man of the English language.

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Those Cherry Blossoms

Children of the Rising Sun, by Willard Price. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock-A John Day Book. 316 pages. $3.

IN THIRTY-THREE brisk, staccato chapters averaging less than ten pages each, Willard Price essays to tell, in his publishers' words, "what the Japanese are and why they are so." He succeeds better in the what than in the why.

Mr. Price has a good eye for illuminating incident and revealing detail. He has a good sense of color and of selection. He can frame a profound truth in an image. But he has also an unfortunate deference for what someone must once have told him was the first law of popular writing: be snappy at all costs and chatty, no matter what the subject. And this might lend itself to conventional travel writing but not to communicating an understanding of so complex a subject as modern Japan. His book is therefore uncommonly interesting reading but so oversimplified, with detail so ironed out or distorted for effect, that the picture of Japan left on the mind is either superficial or untrue.

Most Japanese writers on the agrarian problem will chuckle a bit at Mr. Price's opening chapter, "Saga of Son-of-Two-Acres," which presumably epitomizes the Japanese peasant and peasant life. And most Japanese peasants would be inclined to ask what country he is talking about. There may be peasants whose life is as idyllic as Son-of-Two-Acres, who spends his days in an engaging mixture of poesy, philosophy and hard work, but they are so few that one ought not to describe them as representative. This Mr. Price knows well enough, as is shown by parenthetic remarks in other connections; but when he writes his chapter on Japanese rural life, he feels that he must harmonize it to a single journalistic key.

In the same way, while loyalty is the distinguishing mark of the Japanese people, I am afraid not all Japanese spend their living moments so unintermittently in a mood of consecration. The Emperor-cult, focus of Japanese loyalty, is the race's unifying force. It dominates all else, and there derives from it a sense of the individual's subservience to the race; but nevertheless Japanese are not always consciously in search of self-immolation and, like most other human beings, their awareness most of the time is with respect to their individual problems. They do not carry themselves off in hara-kiri as a whim. The price of rice matters as much as a highly stylized conception of honor. What Mr. Price says is true, but far from the whole truth.

In the chapters on Manchuria I read with surprise that "the bandits are considered too valuable to be killed, unless all other measures fail," so they are caught and put into a bandits' school, since "they are just the sort needed in the building of a new state." This will surprise both the Japanese army in Manchuria and the Manchurian bandits, even more than it does me. I wonder whether Mr. Price ever collected vital statistics on Manchurian bandits in the last two or three years. On Manchuria as a whole he is rather superficial, a bit too admiring of law and order. To describe the undoubted achievements in Japanese construction and the equally undoubted benefits to some of the population without any reference to the social consequences that always follow a colonial conquest is not only superficial but incredibly naïve.

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What he writes of China is external and rather hackneyed. I wonder who told him that Yen Hsi-shan "is one of the brightest hopes of China." I don't suppose anybody has said that for ten years and few except out-port foreigners said it at any time.

In short, this is feature writing of a higher order, but only feature writing. And I think it does Mr. Price an injustice, for I suspect he knows better. One who can say some of the things he does must know better than is reflected by most of the things he says.

NATHANIEL PEFFER

New Books: A Reader's List

DANCER IN MADRID, by Janet Riesenfeld (Funk and Wagnalls, $2.50). A brilliant young dancer, daughter of an MGM musical director, tells how she went to Spain in 1936 to marry a Catalan aristocrat. Caught up in the heroism and passion of Madrid she found, not love, but life and death. A sincere and deeply moving book.

PORTRAITS OF A LIFETIME, by Jacques-Emile Blanche (Coward-McCann, $4). A French painter writes his memoirs (1870-1914). A witty and intelligent book, with glimpses of most of the great figures of the Edwardian era, from Mallarmé to Mabel Dodge, on both sides of the Channel.

CONQUEST OF THE PAST, by Prince Hubertus zu Loewenstein (Houghton Mifflin, $3.50). Autobiography of a German who was successively prince, pauper and Republican, and is now in exile because he firmly upheld democracy at a time when most of his associates had already kowtowed to the Nazis. Interesting sidelights on the pre-war Bavarian aristocracy.

HOTEL IN SPAIN, by Nancy Johnstone (Longmans, Green, $2.50). Nice English couple invest savings in small hotel on seacoast north of Barcelona—make a go of it—carry on through civil war with sympathy and high humor. Wife tells story and tells it well.

THE BROTHERS, by H. G. Wells (Viking, $1.50). A fantastic melodrama, in which twin brothers, powerful leaders of fascism and communism, come face to face and "realize" that they are both fighting for the same thing.

THE WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN and Other Stories, by F. L. Lucas (Simon and Schuster, $2.50). The conflict between personal liberty and the forces of dictatorship treated in a series of stories whose dates range from 53 A.D. to 1995 A.D., when the world, overrun by Hitlers, is finally destroyed. Written with a scholarly approach that does not detract from the sardonic wit.

GREAT ARGUMENT, by Philip Gibbs (Doubleday, Doran, $2.50). No novel, but a passionate argument for good old-fashioned idealism. A very impractical M.P. loses his seat, his newspaper column and even his living because he cannot condone war. His daughter finds her brother a Communist, her lover a Fascist, and is left holding the bag.

THE COMPLETE TALES AND POEMS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE (Modern Library, $1.25). Seventy-four stories, essays, sketches and book reviews; "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym"; all the poems, including the early ones. By no means a complete or even a carefully chosen edition of Poe, but cheap and convenient for schools and small libraries. The Modern Library Giants—of which this is one—have a handsome new binding.

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UNCLE SAM WARD AND HIS CIRCLE, by Maud Howe Elliott (Macmillan, $5). The man whose sophistication, generosity, artistry in cooking and chronic incapacity for serious work combined to make him America's leading nineteenth-century lobbyist. His memoirs and voluminous correspondence are held together on a thin strand of narrative.

THE EDUCATION OF A DIPLOMAT, by Hugh Wilson (Longmans, Green, $2.50). The Ambassador to Germany describes his interneship in diplomacy, at posts in Guatemala, Buenos Aires and pre-war Berlin. He tells no secrets.

THE GATEWAY TO THE MIDDLE AGES, by Eleanor Shipley Duckett (Macmillan, $5). A series of pleasantly written essays, by a distinguished scholar, devoted to the cultural aspects of the sixth century A.D. Interesting quotations that throw new light on the troubled origins of the medieval spirit.

NEW ORLEANS CITY GUIDE, compiled and written by the Federal Writers' Project (Houghton Mifflin, $2.50). Embodying compact information on everything from folkways to Mardi Gras, from the origins of jazz in Negro "spasm" music to Creole cuisine, this is a most pleasant book. It's well organized, well written, well illustrated, a credit to all those who worked it up.

ROBESPIERRE, THE INCORRUPTIBLE, by Friedrich Sieburg (McBride, $3). A vivid biography, accurate in details but distorted in its conclusions. The author, a Nazi journalist, sees Robespierre as a narrow-minded fanatic who tried to force "inhuman" ideas on a nation which is "human to the point of suicide."

AFTER MIDNIGHT, by Irmgard Keun (Knopf, $2.). A novel about a young German girl who knows nothing of politics and is horrified and bewildered by Nazi interference (spying, denunciation, etc.) in the simple adventures of middle-class Aryan life.

THE SINGLE HOUND, by May Sarton (Houghton Mifflin, $2.50). The story of a strange encounter between a muddled young poet and three old ladies whose lives are compounded of whimsy and nostalgia. Written in a delicate manner, with tones so hushed and subtle that some of the implications do not filter through.

GOODBYE WEST COUNTRY, by Henry Williamson (Little, Brown, $3). England's modern Thoreau leaves Devon for a Norfolk farm, and this book is his farewell journal kept in 1936. For sheer writing, minute, shrewd, but imaginative, these descriptions of wild life and the moors are a literary triumph. But the author has a queer notion that Hitler is making happiness possible in Europe.

HELEN KELLER'S JOURNAL (Doubleday, Doran, $2.50). A light and cheery book proving that Helen Keller sees and hears more distinctly than millions who can use their eyes and ears. She preaches love, poetry, tolerance, afterlife and God; she stands for the CIO, an American labor party, socialism and the Soviet Union.

SAVAGE SYMPHONY, by Eva Lips (Random House, $3). Prelude to exile. The story of the German intellectuals who preferred to work "for Germany against Hitler instead of for Hitler against Germany" as typified by the experiences of Jules Lips, former director of the Rautenstrauch-Joest museum in Cologne, and his wife.

Contributors

EDMUND WILSON's most recent book, "The Triple Thinkers," is reviewed in this issue.

BEVERLEY BOWIE, a recent graduate of Harvard University, is in Washington at present doing publicity work for the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. He assisted J. Raymond Walsh in the preparation of material for his book, "CIO: Industrial Unionism in Action."

GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT was an infantry officer with the British forces in the World War and a captain and a major in the United States Military Intelligence Reserve between 1922 and 1930. He is co-author, with R. Ernest Dupuy, of "If War Comes."

JOHN GROTH is a well known painter, illustrator and political cartoonist. He contributes to The New Republic, The Nation, Ken, Judge and Stage.

F. O. MATTHIESSEN is an associate professor of History and Literature at Harvard University. He is the author of "Sarah Orne Jewett" and "The Achievement of T. S. Eliot."

MURIEL MAURER was formerly Fashion Director for The Dry Goods Economist and a buyer for Saks Fifth Avenue and De Pinna.

NATHANIEL PEFFER, the author of several books on the Far East, has recently visited China. He is teaching at Columbia University.

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LECTURES

Joshua Kunitz, Editor NEW MASSES, on "Why Do They Confess?" (at the Soviet Trials), Wednesday evening, April 6th, 8:30 P. M. The Roger Smith, 40 E. 41st Street. Admission: 35c.

JACK STACHEL speaks on "Issues Confronting the 10th Communist Party Convention," Saturday afternoon, April 2nd, 2:30 P. M. Workers School, 35 East 12th Street, 2nd floor. Admission, 25 cents.

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